



BLACK WATCH BRITAIN'S HIGHLAND HEROES

# HISTORY of AIR



## WARNINGS FROM HISTORY

Lord Ashdown on his SBS™ service, the Balkans & Syria

## PEARL HARBOR

DECEMBER 7, 1941

## JAPAN'S FIRST STRIKE

- ★ Inside the plan to cripple the US Navy
- ★ Birth of devastating torpedo tactics
- ★ Secret mini-submarine fleet

## IRON CROSS BRAWLER

CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT ON THE WESTERN FRONT



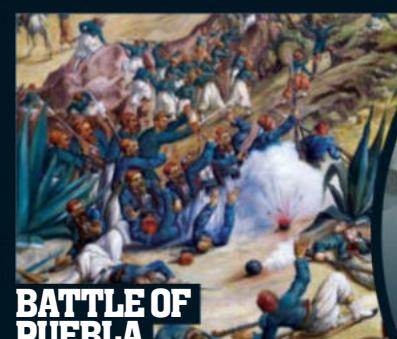
### MERRILL'S MARAUDERS

BEHIND THE LINES IN WWII'S SUICIDAL JUNGLE MISSION



### PAKISTAN'S FRONT LINE

FROM CHAOTIC TRIBAL CLASHES TO THE HEART OF TERROR



### BATTLE OF PUEBLA

UNCOVER THE BLOODY ORIGINS OF CINCO DE MAYO

## FINLAND VS USSR

THE WINTER WAR'S SHOCKING AGAINST-THE-ODDS VICTORY

Future

ISSUE 036

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# NOT ALL OVER BY CHRISTMAS



**Avro 504**

In August 1914 the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was equipped with small numbers of reconnaissance aircraft, of which this was one.



**Christmas Truce**

On Christmas Day 1914 soldiers from the German and British front lines put down their weapons to play friendly football matches.



**The Somme 1916**

Our centenary design lists the individual phases of the battle, names haunting the memories of all the Allied regiments who served there.



**1914-18 Poppy**

The silhouette of an unknown, unarmed soldier, place and date unspecified. The poppy represents the bloody sacrifice to come.

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# Welcome

**"If I am told to fight regardless of the consequences, I shall run wild for the first six months or a year, but I have utterly no confidence for the second or third year"**

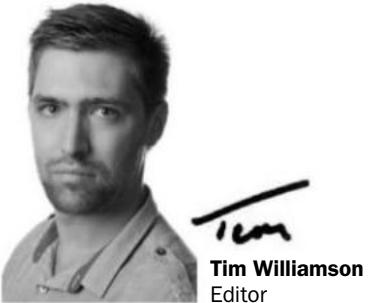
– Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto

The 'Day of Infamy' that stunned the world and hurled the United States into WWII was one of the most shocking and controversial events of the war.

With several co-ordinated strikes across the Pacific, the Japanese Empire catapulted itself into another conflict, one which Admiral Yamamoto suspected could not be won in the long term.

Now nearly 75 years later, the aftermath of that fateful first strike is well known. However, the planning, technology and sheer daring involved are still fascinating topics for study. This

issue we explore Japan's most famous military operation, and attempt to understand why ultimately it failed.



Tim Williamson  
Editor

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*The USS Arizona burns furiously after Japanese bombs caused one its forward magazines to explode. To the left men of USS Tennessee are training fire hoses on the water to force burning oil away from their ship. 7 December 1941*



## CONTRIBUTORS

### TOM GARNER

This month Tom was thrilled to interview the only hero of his not from the 15th century – Paddy Ashdown (p.80). He discusses his military career, his work for the UN in Bosnia, as well as the importance of history in modern politics.



### MIKE HASKEW

For the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, Mike has delved into the meticulous planning behind the Japanese operation, the machines that were deployed, as well as how a Royal Navy mission served as a crucial blueprint (p.36).



### PETER WOLFGANG PRICE

Even within the lengthy history of the British Army, the Black Watch stands out for its prestige and longevity. This issue Peter explores the key battles that have come to define this steadfast Highland regiment over centuries of service (p.28).



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# BLACK WATCH

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During WWII Scandinavia's easternmost state was caught between the USSR and Nazi Germany

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During the various stages of its allegiances, Finland fought along the full length of its borders

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This crucial encounter saw the Soviet army utterly outmanoeuvred and destroyed by Finnish forces

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With few advanced machines and armament available, improvised arms were often called upon

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Caught between Hitler and Stalin, Finland made several compromises to protect its independence

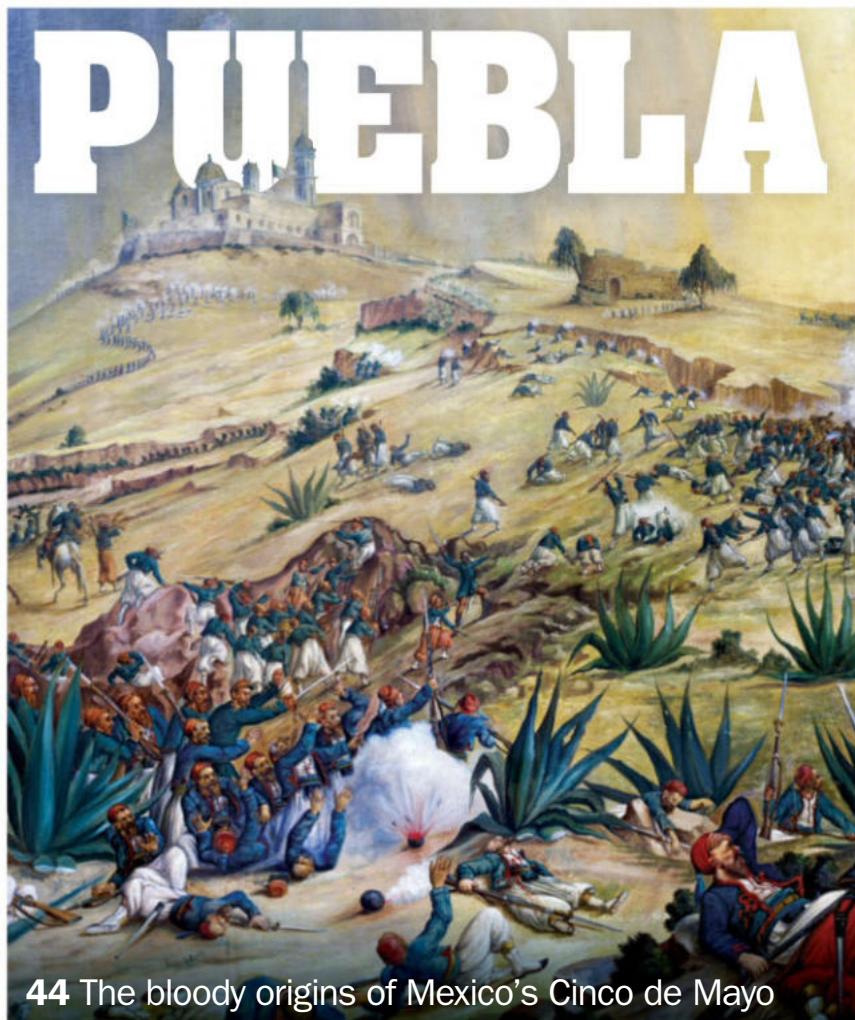
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A few of the Winter War's standout soldiers

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# WAR in FOCUS

## BORDER FIRE

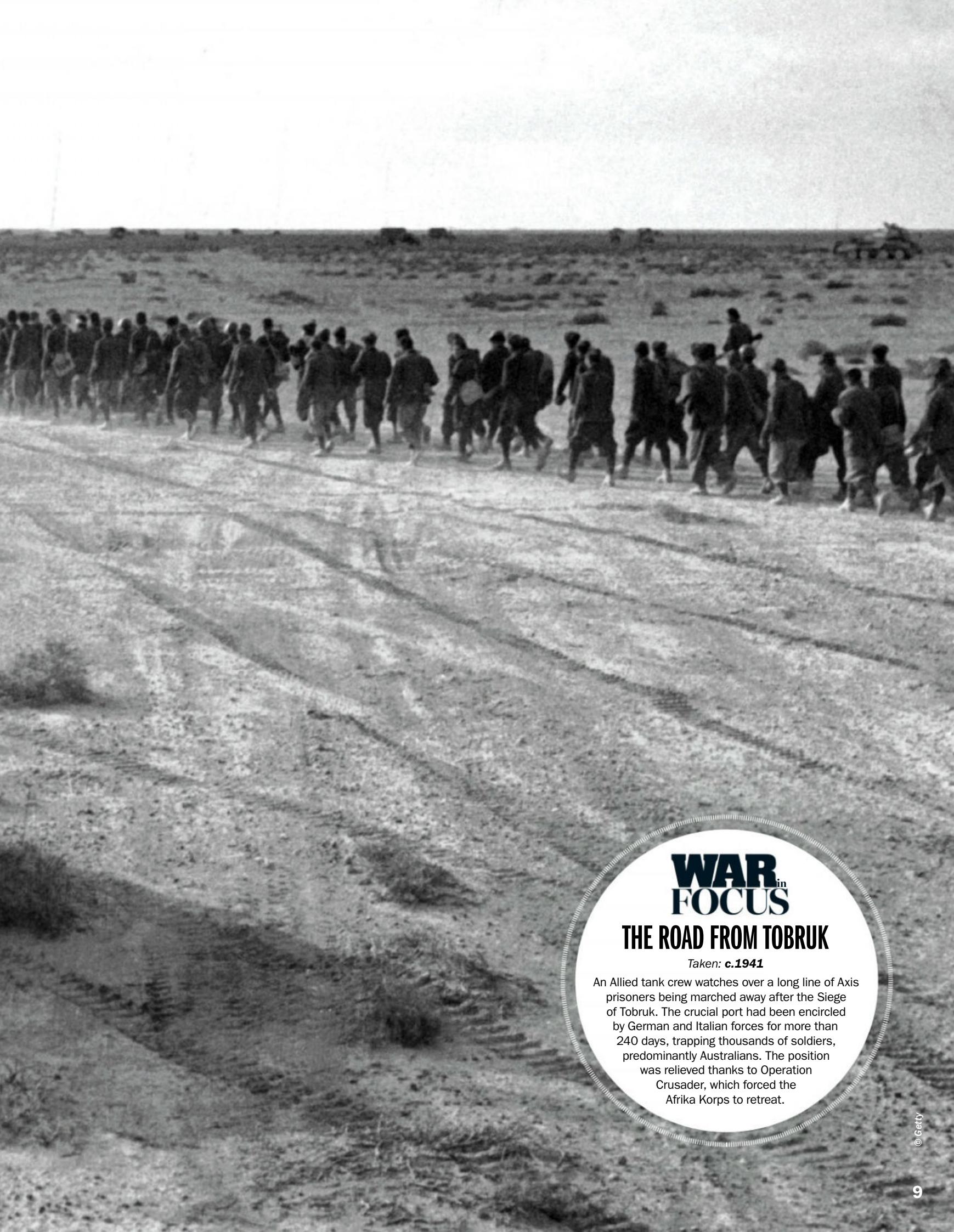
Taken: 24 January 2014

South Korean troops conduct a series of live firing exercises at a shooting range in Yeoncheon County, Gyeonggi Province on the border with the DPRK. In April 1951, the area was at the centre of the Battle of Yultong Bridge during the Chinese Spring Offensive. The campaign succeeded in forcing a strategic withdrawal of UN forces.









## WAR in FOCUS

### THE ROAD FROM TOBRUK

Taken: c.1941

An Allied tank crew watches over a long line of Axis prisoners being marched away after the Siege of Tobruk. The crucial port had been encircled by German and Italian forces for more than 240 days, trapping thousands of soldiers, predominantly Australians. The position was relieved thanks to Operation Crusader, which forced the Afrika Korps to retreat.

# WAR in FOCUS

## IN THE FIRING LINE

Taken: 9 April 1943

The forewoman of a Soviet Komsomol workers brigade inspects a completed PPSh-41 machine-gun at the end of an assembly line. The Komsomol, or 'All-Union Leninist Young Communist League', was effectively the youth branch of the ruling Communist Party and during the war was at the heart of the home front effort to support the fight against Nazi Germany.





# WAR in FOCUS

## SPENDING XMAS IN 'NAM

Taken: 25 December 1967

Two American soldiers rest near their small Christmas tree on Hill 875, Dak To, Vietnam. Just the previous month, the North Vietnamese Army had launched a huge offensive against American positions, with Hill 875 at the centre of the assault. The Battle of Dak To was among the bloodiest of the entire war, with thousands of combined NVA and American casualties.





TIMELINE OF...

# FINLAND AT WAR

The easternmost Scandinavian country fought three separate defensive conflicts to preserve Finnish independence: two against Soviet Russia and one against Nazi Germany

## THE WINTER WAR

In November 1939, nearly 1 million Soviet troops invaded Finland after the Finns refused to cede key territory to Joseph Stalin. Over four months, Finnish soldiers used the extremely cold winter to stop and destroy Russian columns.

November 1939-March 1940

1939-44

February 1940

March 1940-June 1941

## THE BOMBING OF HELSINKI

The Finnish capital was first bombed on 30 November 1939, just three hours into the Winter War. Between 1939-44, Helsinki was bombed by the Russians 47 times, resulting in casualties of 342 dead, 906 injured and 164 buildings destroyed.

*Left: The Soviet bombing of Helsinki, 30 November 1939. On the same day, 21 divisions of the Red Army invaded Finland*



## BREAKTHROUGH ON THE MANNERHEIM LINE

By early 1940, the Russians had been continually humiliated in battle. The Soviets reorganised and began a massive offensive on the Karelian Isthmus on 1 February 1940. The overstretched Finnish Army almost collapsed after a Soviet breakthrough on the defensive Mannerheim Line on 11 February and sued for peace.



*Left: Red Army soldiers show off a captured Finnish state flag. Their triumphant pose belies the fact that they had not been able to conquer the country*

## ALLIANCE WITH NAZI GERMANY

After being forced to concede territory to the Russians, Finland entered an informal pact with Germany to defend itself against further Soviet attacks. German troops were permitted to make bases in Lapland in preparation for Operation Barbarossa.

## "NEARLY 1 MILLION SOVIET TROOPS INVADED FINLAND AFTER THE FINNS REFUSED TO CEDE KEY TERRITORY TO JOSEPH STALIN"

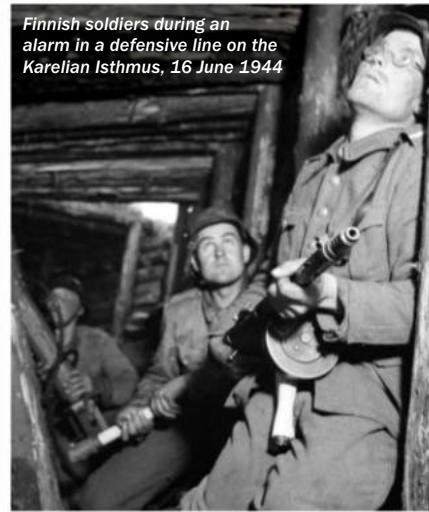


Finnish ski troops on patrol in northern Finland, 12 January 1940. Soldiers like these wrought havoc on the invading Soviet forces

June 1941-September 1944

### CONTINUATION WAR

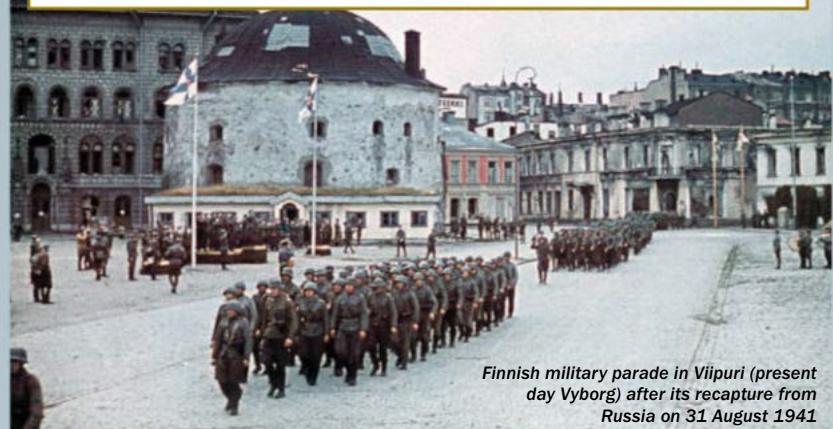
Finland joined the war against the Russians days after the commencement of Operation Barbarossa. Finnish armies eventually regained the lost territory on the Karelian Isthmus and halted their offensive 30 kilometres short of Leningrad. The Soviet armies responded by launching huge counterattacks, but the Finns fought them to a standstill.



Finnish soldiers during an alarm in a defensive line on the Karelian Isthmus, 16 June 1944

### THE KARELIAN ISTHMUS CONQUESTS

In July 1941, the Finnish Army launched a major offensive on the Karelian Isthmus and north of Lake Ladoga. The Finns managed to advance as far as the outskirts of Leningrad and as a result, their participation aided German maritime operations in the Baltic against Russia.



Finnish military parade in Viipuri (present day Vyborg) after its recapture from Russia on 31 August 1941

A destroyed Soviet T-26 tank at the Battle of Ilimantsi. This Finnish victory was the last battle of the Continuation War and led to subsequent peace talks



### THE MOSCOW ARMISTICE

The armistice was a peace agreement between Finland and the USSR, with the Russians reconfirming the territory they had won in the Winter War. German troops had to be expelled from Finnish territory but the country avoided Soviet occupation.

July-September 1944

19 September 1944

September 1944-April 1945

### THE LAPLAND WAR

Following the Soviet demand for German troops to be withdrawn from Finland, fighting broke out between the former allies. The Germans were driven out of most of northern Finland but they devastated large parts of Finnish territory in revenge. The last German troops were expelled in April 1945.



The Germans put up a bitter sign for their former Finnish allies in Muonio, it reads: "As a thanks for not demonstrating a brotherhood of arms"

# WAR IN THE NORTH

Finland's conflicts during WWII were fought at the extreme northern and southern parts of the country with the most intense fighting occurring on the Finnish-Russian border in and around Karelia

## 1 MANNERHEIM LINE 1939-40

To protect the south-east border of Finland, approximately 200 machine gun positions and shelters are built out of concrete. The Red Army is halted at this line for two months before breaking through in February 1940 after heavy bombardments.

## 2 OPERATION NORDLICHT: THE GERMAN EVACUATION FROM FINLAND

4 OCTOBER 1944 - 30 JANUARY 1945 FINNISH LAPLAND

7

## 3 MOSCOW PEACE TREATY 12 March 1940

The overwhelming threat from the Soviet Union pushes Finland to the negotiating table. Despite their military success against the Red Army, the Finns are forced to concede large areas of territory, including the Karelian Isthmus, Viipuri Bay, Salla, Hanko and some islands in the Gulf of Finland.

## 4 BATTLE OF ROVANIEMI (GERMAN RETREAT)

OCTOBER 1944 - 17 NOVEMBER 1944 ARCTIC, LAPLAND, NORTHERN RUSSIA

## 5 BRITISH FLEET AIR RAID ON KIRKENES AND PETSAMO (AXIS VICTORY)

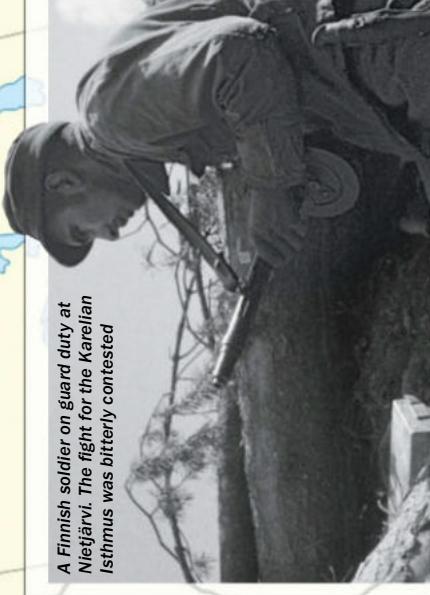
30 JULY 1941 KIRKENES, NORWAY, PETSAMO, FINLAND

## 6 BATTLE OF NIETJÄRVI 15-17 July 1944

This is the Red Army's second attempt at a breakthrough in the Nietjärvı sector. Over the course of two days, the attacking Soviet division is partially surrounded before suffering 2,000 casualties and retreating in disarray.

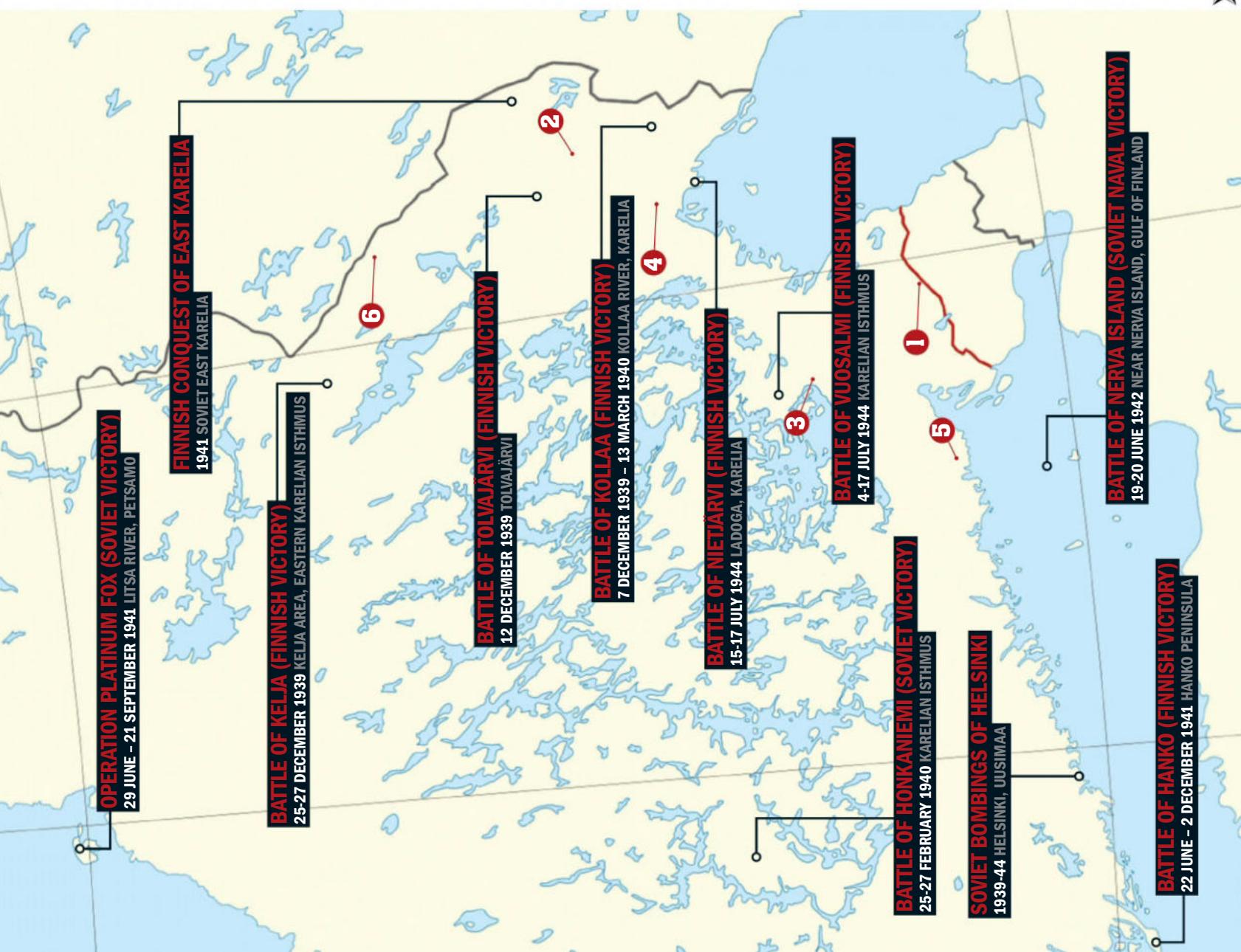
## 7 HITLER'S VISIT TO FINLAND 4 June 1942

In early June 1942, Adolf Hitler pays a brief visit to Field Marshal Mannerheim to ensure Finland keeps applying pressure on the USSR. Mannerheim personally dislikes the Führer and a conversation between them is secretly recorded. It becomes the only recording of Hitler speaking informally.



## 8 BATTLE OF PETSAMO (SOVIET ADVANCE)

30 NOVEMBER 1939 - 12 MARCH 1940 PETSAMO



## 5 BATTLE OF TALL-IHANTALA 25 July - 9 August 1944

With 50,000 Finns against 150,000 Soviet troops, Tall-Ihantala is the largest battle in the history of Scandinavia. In a defensive victory, Finnish troops fight the Soviets to a halt and partly encircle them, inflicting three times more casualties than they receive.

## 6 BATTLE OF ILOMANTSU 26 July - 13 August 1944

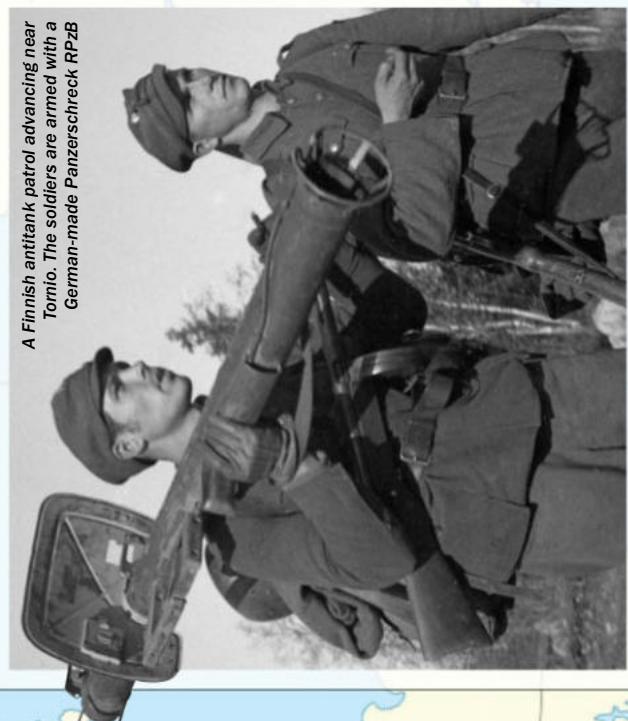
Despite previous defeats, the Red Army attempts a new offensive north of Lake Ladoga around Ilomantsi. Although they are superior in manpower and materiel, two Soviet divisions are encircled and virtually destroyed. Ilomantsi is the last major Soviet attack on Finland.

## 7 MOSCOW ARMISTICE 19 September 1944

After the end of the Continuation War, the territorial gains made during the conflict by Finland are returned to the USSR and the territory lost in the Winter War is re-confirmed. As well as heavy reparations, Finland is also forced to eject German forces, which leads to the Lapland War.

## 8 BATTLE OF TORNIO 1-8 October 1944

After the Soviets demand that German forces leave Finland, war breaks out between the former allies. The Battle of Tornio is the first major engagement of the Lapland War, which results in a German retreat, but hundreds of casualties are incurred on both sides.



# BATTLE OF SUOMUSSALMI

This prolonged clash was a defining battle of the Winter War and set the tone for Finnish defiance against Soviet aggression

**B**etween 7 December 1939 and 8 January 1940, the Finns fought a desperate battle to prevent the Russians from occupying their country. In early December 1939, elements of the Soviet 9th Army – some 45,000–55,000 men – advanced on the village of Suomussalmi with the intention of overrunning the Finnish-Russian border. The Soviet objective was to use the capture of Suomussalmi to then force the Finns to fight on two fronts. This would effectively cut Finland in half and lead to its inevitable collapse. However, the Red Army had not counted on the ingenuity and defiance of the 11,000 Finns pitted against them.

**“THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE WAS TO USE THE CAPTURE OF SUOMUSSALMI TO THEN FORCE THE FINNS TO FIGHT ON TWO FRONTS. THIS WOULD EFFECTIVELY CUT FINLAND IN HALF”**

## ‘MOTTI’ TACTICS

**THE FINNISH VICTORY AT SUOMUSSALMI WAS LARGELY THANKS TO AN INGENIOUS LOCAL WAY OF FIGHTING AGAINST A NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR FOE**

The Finns were always vastly outnumbered but they repeatedly triumphed against the Russians in battle through an enveloping tactic known as ‘motti’.

‘Motti’ is a Finnish slang word that originally meant ‘one cubic metre of firewood’. It was in this flammable context that the tactic was developed. To counter their numerical inferiority, Finns would attack Soviet columns by quickly bypassing their strong points and attacking from behind. The element of surprise was crucial and Soviet soldiers would find themselves cut off while trying to root out Finnish attacks in their rear. The Finns would call these doomed and isolated units ‘mottis’. This was a wintry version of ‘divide and conquer’.

Although Soviet mottis were often well defended, the Finns used a variety of tactics to destroy them. If there was a cluster of weak and strong mottis, the Finns would attack the

### 1. 7 DECEMBER: SUOMUSSALMI FALLS

The village falls to Soviet forces with little resistance. Only one Finnish battalion is in the sector at Raate, just outside Suomussalmi. They destroy this smaller settlement to deny the Soviets shelter and withdraw to the opposite shores of lakes Niskanselkä and Haukiperä.



Hjalmar Fridolf Siilasvuo

### 2. SOVIET PROBLEMS ON THE ICE

Between 8–9 December, the Soviets make two failed attempts to attack across the frozen lakes to the west of Suomussalmi. They fail because the ice can support the Russian soldiers but not their tanks and heavy equipment. The Finns are reinforced by five battalions, three separate companies and two reconnaissance detachments under Colonel Hjalmar Siilasvuo, who takes command.

### 3. THE FINNS’ FAILED ASSAULT

On 11 December, the Finns make a bid to retake Suomussalmi. Over the next week, they launch several assaults to retake the village, with the main objective being the settlement’s church. Finnish forces are unsuccessful and incur serious losses.

### 4. THE SOVIET COUNTERATTACK

On 24 December, the Red Army attempts to counterattack from Suomussalmi. Even though the Finns have been unable to take the village, they have assembled their own formidable defences and these prove too strong for the Soviets to break through.

### 5. THE FINNS RECAPTURE SUOMUSSALMI

The Finns launch a new assault on the village after being reinforced with two regiments. This time their attack is successful and the Soviets flee over the frozen lakes of Niskanselkä and Haukiperä.

### 6. PURSUING THE RED ARMY

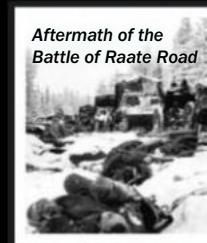
Now that Suomussalmi has been taken, Colonel Siilasvuo transfers all available forces to the Raate road area where the Soviets occupy the stretch between Kuomasjoki and Likoharju. Siilasvuo’s strategy is simple: cut the Red Army supply lines to the border.

### 7. SIILASVUO’S PLAN

The Finnish commander aims to cut the fleeing Soviets’ escape and supply route by dividing them into smaller segments (these are called ‘mottis’ by Finnish soldiers). The mottis are to be isolated and destroyed with the Finnish forces creating a parallel road in the Alanteenjärvi-Vuokkijärvi area, which is used to assemble troops, shelter and resupply between attacks.

### 8. BATTLE OF RAATE ROAD

From 1–8 January, Siilasvuo’s plan is deployed along the Raate Road with the main thrust of the Finnish attack at Haukila. The Soviet troops are completely surrounded and wiped out at Sanginlampi and Eskola. They are also encircled at Karila, Tyynelä and Mattila.



### 9. ENDGAME AT HAUKILA

Between 5–8 January, three regiments of the Soviet 44th Division are squeezed into a small area at Haukila, with their escape route to the east closed. The 44th are turned into a big ‘motti’ and the Finns destroy them over three days. By 10 January, the Suomussalmi area has been cleared of Russian troops.

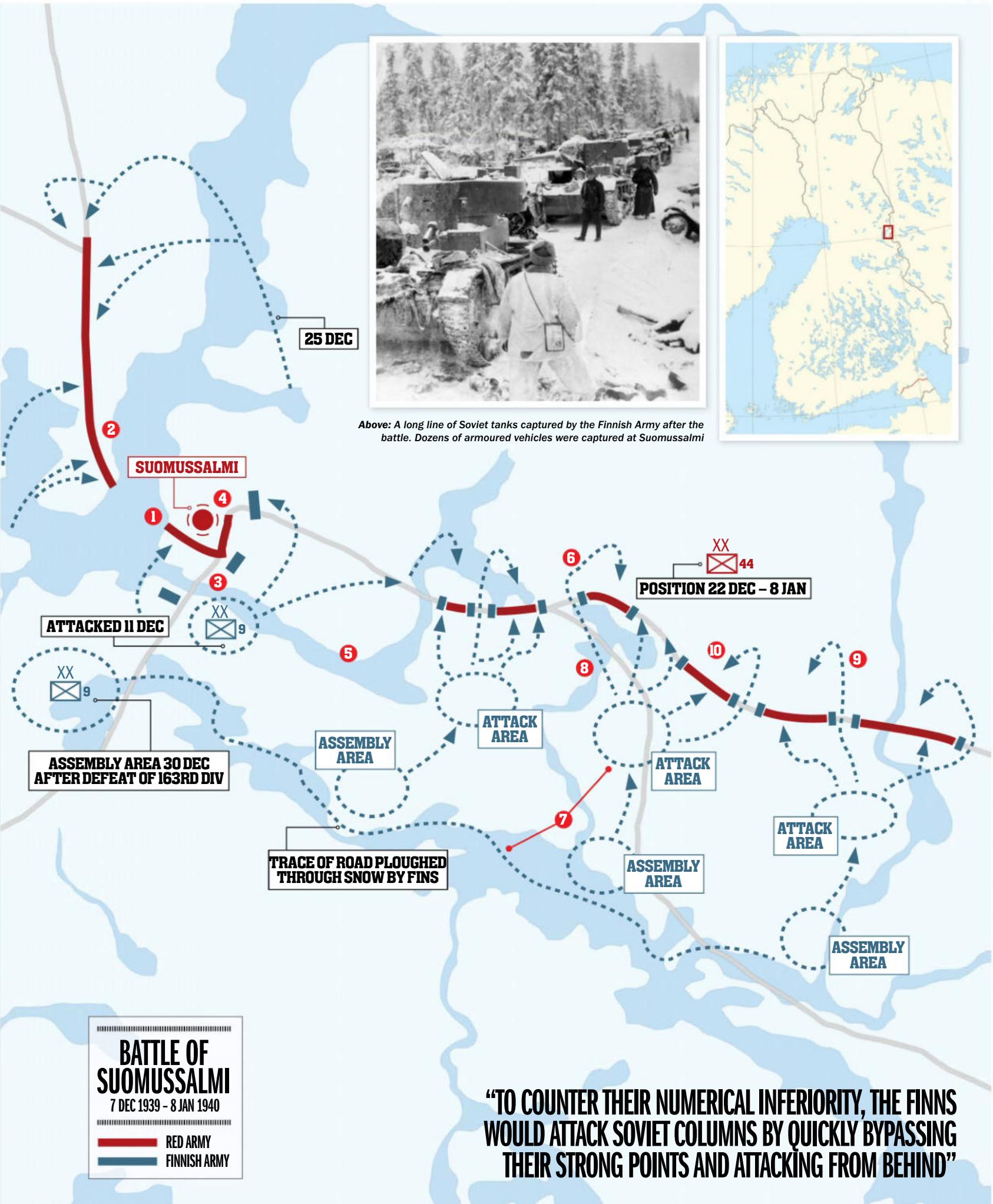
### 10. A HAUL OF ENEMY EQUIPMENT

After the battles on the Raate Road, the Finns capture a huge amount of discarded Russian equipment including dozens of tanks and artillery pieces plus thousands of rifles and other weapons.

Soviet infantrymen on skis under fire from Finnish artillery during the Winter War. Motti tactics entailed cramming soldiers like these into isolated groups and then destroying them



weaker ones first and leave the larger ones to suffer with the blistering cold temperatures and lack of food. Troops would then chip away at defending positions by attacking at nighttime and tightening the perimeter. They would also assault the mottis 24 hours a day by rotating Finnish soldiers in the frontline to keep up a relentless bombardment. Suomussalmi was the largest motti clash of its kind during the Winter War and was a textbook case for future battles.



**BATTLE OF SUOMUSSALMI**  
7 DEC 1939 – 8 JAN 1940

RED ARMY  
FINNISH ARMY

ATTACKED 11 DEC

ASSEMBLY AREA 30 DEC AFTER DEFEAT OF 163RD DIV

TRACE OF ROAD PLOUGHED THROUGH SNOW BY FINS

ATTACK AREA

ASSEMBLY AREA

ASSEMBLY AREA

ASSEMBLY AREA

POSITION 22 DEC – 8 JAN

XX 9

XX 44

25 DEC

Above: A long line of Soviet tanks captured by the Finnish Army after the battle. Dozens of armoured vehicles were captured at Suomussalmi

**SUOMUSSALMI**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**“TO COUNTER THEIR NUMERICAL INFERIORITY, THE FINNS WOULD ATTACK SOVIET COLUMNS BY QUICKLY BYPASSING THEIR STRONG POINTS AND ATTACKING FROM BEHIND”**

**MAP DETAILS:**  
 - Red lines represent Soviet (Red Army) movement paths.  
 - Blue lines represent Finnish movement paths.  
 - Dashed blue circles indicate assembly areas for the Finnish Army.  
 - Numbered points (1-10) mark specific locations or events along the front line.  
 - Icons for 'XX 9' and 'XX 44' represent divisional headquarters.  
 - A box labeled 'TRACE OF ROAD PLOUGHED THROUGH SNOW BY FINS' shows a path through the snow.  
 - A photograph in the top right corner shows a long line of captured Soviet tanks in a snowy landscape.

# ARCHAIC WEAPONS

With extremely limited resources, Finland managed to avoid a Soviet conquest by using an unlikely array of antiquated or improvised weapons and vehicles

**A**lthough mobilisation was at nearly 100 per cent in 1939, Finland's armed forces experienced severe equipment and munitions shortages. Both the army and air force fought with extremely outdated weapons that included some firearms and artillery pieces dating from the 19th century. Consequently, the fight for Finnish independence often relied on weapon improvisations. This did yield obvious failures but there were also notable successes.

#### ARMAMENT

BT-42s were armed with a QF 4.5-inch field howitzer that could rotate 360 degrees. The British government supplied them but the guns first entered service in 1910.

## BT-42 ASSAULT GUN

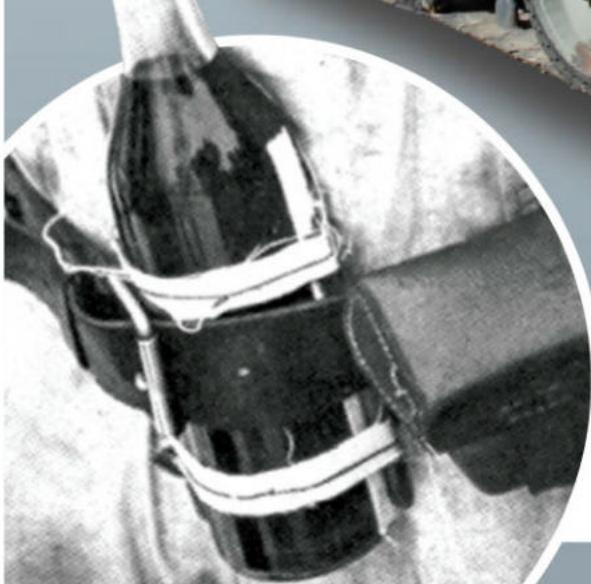
The Finns had very limited numbers of armoured vehicles and improvised with bits of equipment they either already owned or had captured. The BT-42 combined a Russian tank hull and a British howitzer gun. Only 18 were manufactured and they proved to be unreliable and easy targets for Soviet T-34s.

#### ENGINE

The Mikulin M-17T engine enabled speeds of 53kmph, had an operational range of 378 kilometres and a 500 horsepower output. However, it was rather unreliable and strained under the weight of the tank's huge gun and turret.

#### TURRET

The turret was an original Finnish design but its weight put great pressure on the engine. Its distinctive look made it an easy target for enemy artillery and tanks.



*Left: Russian cluster bombs were nicknamed 'Molotov bread baskets' by the Finns, who in turn ironically invented the 'cocktail' as a 'drink to go with dinner'*

## MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

This legendary improvised weapon was immortalised in the Winter War. Simply made of a glass bottle filled with gasoline, alcohol (usually vodka), soap, tar and a lighted rag, the bombs were nonetheless very effective against the highly flammable Russian tanks. A Finnish state corporation called Alko produced 540,000 'cocktails' during the conflict.



## FOKKER CV

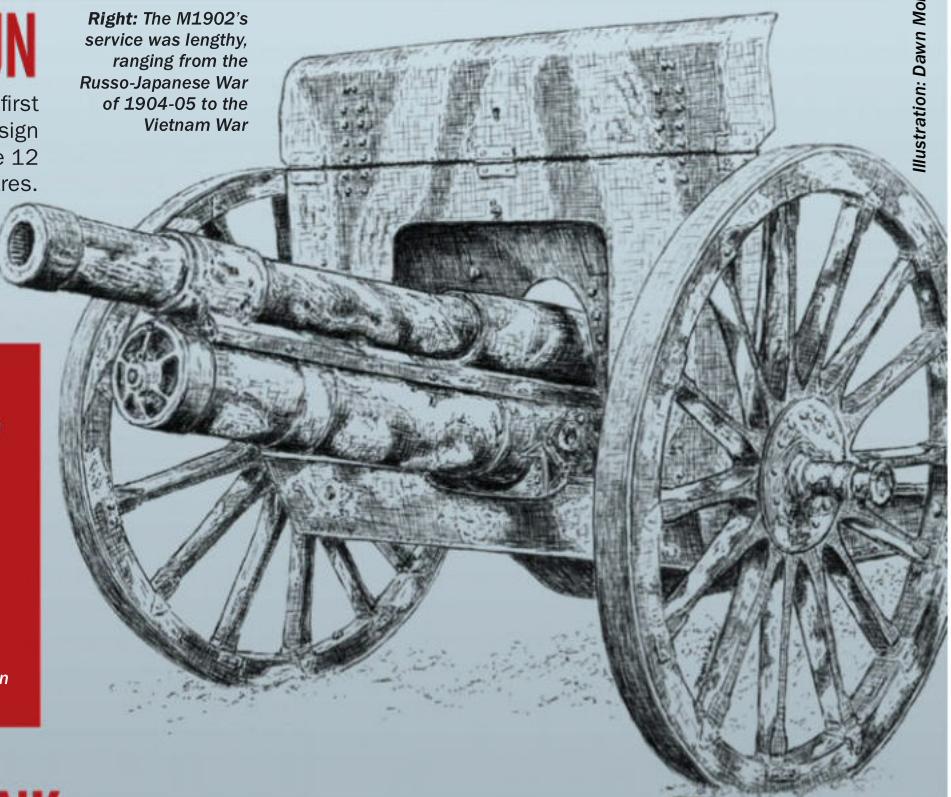
The Finnish Air Force was in poor shape in 1939 and operated a plethora of inadequate or antiquated aircraft. The oldest of these were Fokker CV biplanes, which were originally designed in 1924 but were used as night reconnaissance and bombing aircraft during the Winter War.

## 76MM M1902 GUN

The M1902 was a Russian light field gun first developed in 1902. It had a conventional design with a rectangular gun shield that could fire 12 rounds-per-minute at a range of 8.49 kilometres.

Despite its age, during World War II it was not just used by the Finns but also by the Germans who captured many during Operation Barbarossa.

*Right: The M1902's service was lengthy, ranging from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 to the Vietnam War*



## MOSIN-NAGANT M91

Most Finnish (and Russian) infantrymen carried a Mosin-Nagant M91 rifle, even though it was a 19th-century invention. The Finnish army was left with a surplus of these weapons after the Russian Revolution, and during the interwar period they simply traded other rifles to add to their existing stock.

*Left: The Finns used their abundant supply of spare parts to adapt the rifle during the 1920s, in preparation for future wars*

## VICKERS 6-TON TANK

This light tank was designed and evaluated by the British but was rejected for service by the British Army. They were used as part of Finland's only tank attack during the Winter War at the Battle of Honkaniemi, which was a disaster. Out of 13 available tanks, only six were used and they were knocked out by dozens of Soviet tanks.

*Right: Finnish 6-ton Vickers tanks were manufactured in Britain in 1939. This tank was upgraded with a captured Soviet 45mm gun in a T-26 turret during the war*



# HEAD TO HEAD

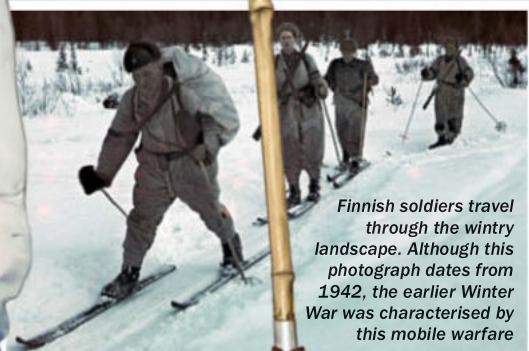
In 1939, hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops invaded Finland in an attempt to conquer the country but in the resulting Winter War, the Red Army received a severe drubbing from the outnumbered Finns

## FINNISH ARMY SOLDIER

ACTIVE CIRCA: 1939-40



**"FINNISH TROOPERS WORE WHITE UNIFORMS AND CAMOUFLAGE TO BLEND INTO THE TERRAIN"**



Finnish soldiers travel through the wintry landscape. Although this photograph dates from 1942, the earlier Winter War was characterised by this mobile warfare

## NUMBERS

The Finnish Army initially only numbered 180,000, supported by the volunteer White Guards. They were outnumbered in all areas, having only 32 tanks and 114 combat aircraft with which to fend off the Soviets.

## EQUIPMENT

Finnish equipment was mainly obsolete and soldiers often relied on antiquated rifles, but they also had light machine guns like the Lahti-Saloranta M/26, and also collected discarded Soviet weapons such as the PPD-40.

## TACTICS

Using 'motti' infantry tactics, Finnish soldiers would encircle and destroy enemy units. Methods included jamming vehicle tracks with logs and using Molotov cocktails to detonate fuel tanks.

## SURVIVABILITY

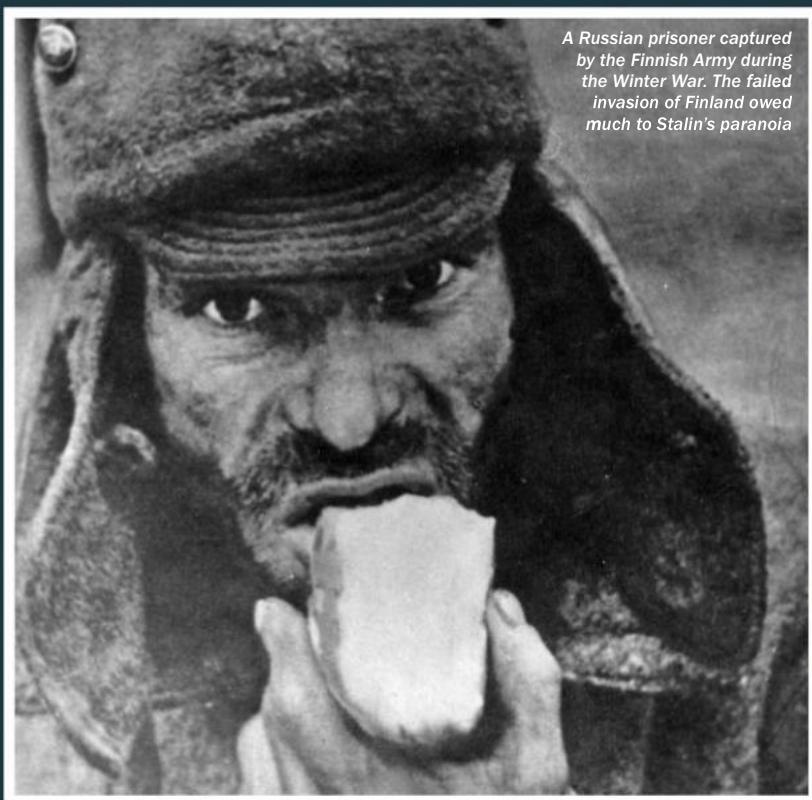
Thanks to their tactics, local knowledge and skilful adaptability to the harsh Scandinavian climate, Finnish losses were comparatively light during the Winter War. The total casualties were around 26,662 dead and 39,886 wounded.

## TOTAL



## WARFARE ON ICE

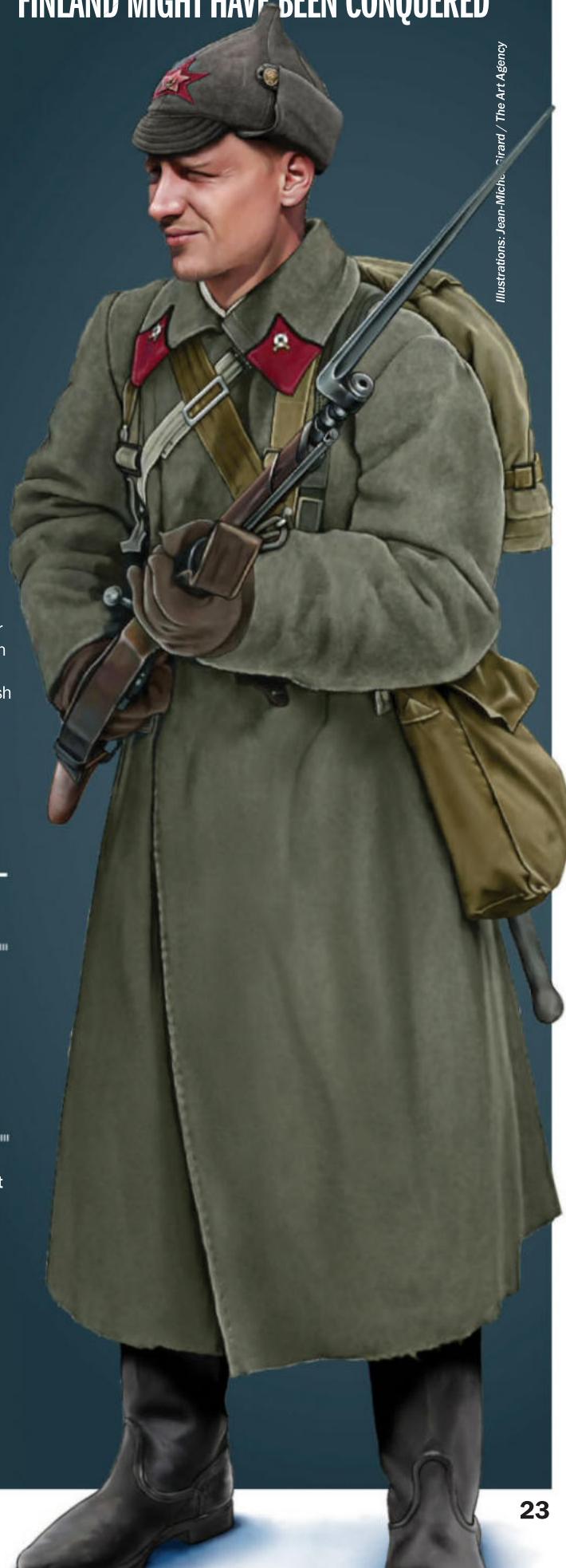
Finland has a relatively flat landscape with forests, swamps and thousands of lakes. This was not ideal terrain for moving heavy weaponry in winter as the Soviets would discover but for the Finns, the frozen topography was ideal for defence. Finnish troopers wore white uniforms and camouflage to blend into the terrain and used skis, sledges and horses (often captured from the Russians) to speed through the countryside. They took every opportunity to outmanoeuvre and attack the Red Army, which stubbornly stuck to roads and rigid formations, and consequently inflicted huge damage on the invaders.



*A Russian prisoner captured by the Finnish Army during the Winter War. The failed invasion of Finland owed much to Stalin's paranoia*

**"HAD THE SOVIET COMMAND STRUCTURE NOT BEEN LIQUIDATED, IT IS ARGUABLE THAT FINLAND MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONQUERED"**

Illustrations: Jean-Michel Girard / The Art Agency



## BROKEN CHAIN OF COMMAND

The poor Russian performance during the Winter War was largely a result of Stalin's paranoid purge of the Red Army's high command in the late 1930s. Beginning in 1937, tens of thousands of officers, including theoreticians and senior commanders, were executed to fit Stalin's personal view of a docile military that bent

to his will. This deliberate destruction of talent was a self-inflicted wound that later manifested itself in Finland when 1 million men were stalled for months with heavy casualties before a thinly defended Finnish line. Had the Soviet command structure not been liquidated, it is arguable that Finland might have been conquered.

## RED ARMY SOLDIER

ACTIVE CIRCA: 1939-40

### NUMBERS

Numerically far superior, the Russians massed 1 million men along the Finnish border and invaded in November 1939 with 450,000 men, 6,451 armoured vehicles and 3,880 aircraft.

### EQUIPMENT

Although they possessed more hard equipment like vehicles and artillery, the Soviets were hampered by a lack of camouflage. Their darker uniforms made them easy targets in the snowy landscape for Finnish snipers and machine gunners.

### TACTICS

Although borne out of revolution, the Red Army's tactics were rooted in the tsarist past. This included traditional large-scale frontal attacks, which had little effect against the Finns' guerrilla warfare.

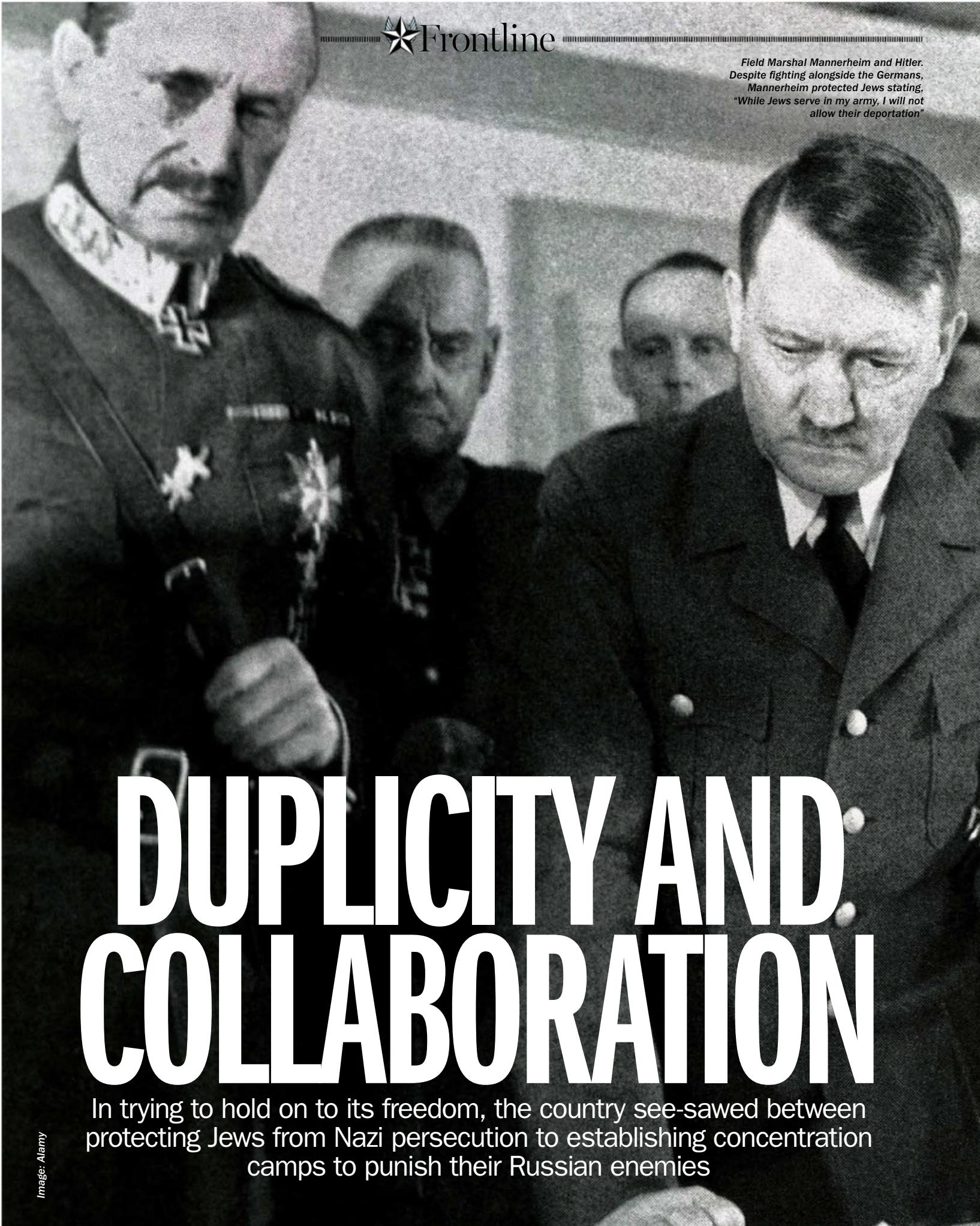
### SURVIVABILITY

Although the Soviets eventually beat the Finnish, their poor performance cost them dear. At the hands of the Finns, Red Army losses were approximately 126,875 dead, 264,908 wounded and 5,572 captured.

### TOTAL



Field Marshal Mannerheim and Hitler.  
Despite fighting alongside the Germans,  
Mannerheim protected Jews stating,  
“While Jews serve in my army, I will not  
allow their deportation”



# DUPPLICITY AND COLLABORATION

In trying to hold on to its freedom, the country see-sawed between protecting Jews from Nazi persecution to establishing concentration camps to punish their Russian enemies



The swastika is still used on flags by the Finnish Air Force. The pictured flag represents the Air Force Academy and has been in use since 2005



**Left:** A possibly staged photo of Russian children at a Finnish-run concentration camp in Petrozavodsk. The sign declares, in Finnish and Russian, "Entry to the camp and conversations through the fence are forbidden under penalty of death"



A Finnish Air Force aircraft. During the Lapland War, it was swastikas against swastikas as the Finns fought to expel Nazi Germany from their country

**T**he story of Finland's role during WWII is arguably the most unique and ambiguous of the whole conflict. The roots for this lay in the country's desire to retain its independence despite being surrounded by totalitarian regimes. Against all the odds, and with a population of only 3 million, the country managed to maintain its freedom. However, in order to achieve that, there were many moral compromises made between 1939-45 that have since been largely forgotten and that sit uneasily with the popular view of Finland being a plucky underdog against external aggression.

Finland was a young country in 1939. Originally part of Sweden – albeit with a different language and culture – from 1809, Finnish territory had been surrendered to the Russian Empire and run as a semi-autonomous 'grand duchy'. The Finns declared independence after the Russian Revolution and established a democratic republic in 1919. The new country was vehemently opposed to Bolshevism and actively resisted coming under Russian rule again, let alone the Soviet rule threatened in 1939. For the next five years, Finns fought tooth and nail to maintain independence from their neighbour to the east but in order to achieve that, Finland made a Faustian pact with Nazi Germany.

After fighting the Winter War alone, an informal Finnish-German agreement was formalised in September 1940 and led to the stationing of increasing numbers of German troops in Finland. Now an ally of the Third Reich, they launched an offensive to recover lost territory that coincided perfectly with German aims in Operation Barbarossa. Finnish participation helped to blockade the Soviet Baltic Fleet, tie down Russian troops and put

pressure on Leningrad, then under German siege. However, it would be wrong to assume that Finland was a typical ally. Unlike Italy and Japan, the Finns never signed the Tripartite Pact and therefore were not an official member of the Axis Powers. This made Allied feelings towards Finland deeply ambivalent.

The Allies had great goodwill towards the Finns because of the stirring defence of democracy in the Winter War, but that was now compromised by the vital need to support the Soviet Union after 1941. Consequently, Britain half-heartedly declared war on Finland during the Continuation War but there were no hostilities with the USA. The Allies could also not entirely condemn the Finns, as they remained democratic and held presidential elections throughout the 1939-45 period, which was unprecedented for a Nazi ally.

Above all, despite the close co-operation with the Nazis, Finland did not persecute Jews. There were around 2,000 Finnish Jews, including approximately 100 refugees from Central Europe, and like all able-bodied males, 200 Jewish men served in the Finnish armed forces as conscripts. This led to a bizarre situation where Jews in the Finnish Army fought on the same side as the Nazis, however, these soldiers saw themselves as fighting for their homeland, not Hitler. Despite the presence of Waffen-SS troops on Finnish soil, official

government policy dictated that there was 'no Jewish question'. Although eight foreign Jews were handed over to the Gestapo in 1942, the resulting public outcry meant there were no more deportations. This was extremely at odds with Nazi policy, but the Finns themselves were guilty of appalling acts against the Soviets.

There was little pity for captured Red Army soldiers. About 19,000 Soviet POWs died in Finnish prison camps, largely due to malnutrition and disease. This number was about 30 per cent of the total prisoners and the Finns also carried a mini-version of Lebensraum in captured Russian territory. When Eastern Karelia was conquered, plans were enacted to deport Russians to German-occupied Russia. 24,000 Russian civilians were interned in concentration camps and 4,200 died from malnourishment during 1942, including more than 3,000 inmates at Petrozavodsk camp. This was a death toll of almost 14 per cent and it is hard to escape the conclusion that in this regard, Finnish nationalism proved as toxic as that of its unsavoury allies.

Perhaps the most potent symbol of Finland's ambivalent stance to outsiders was the use of the swastika. Adopted by the Nazi Party in Germany in 1920, the swastika was actually a common motif in Baltic folk art as a symbol of luck. The Finnish Air Force actually introduced a blue swastika as its emblem from 1918 – two years before the Nazis popularised it – and it remained in use until 1945. The symbol's blackened reputation under the Nazis confused Finnish intentions during WWII to the outside world. Although it fought alongside the Third Reich, Finland's overriding aim throughout the conflict was to remain independent and democratic. It ultimately achieved these aims, although arguably at a great ethical price.

**"ABOUT 19,000 SOVIET POWS DIED IN FINNISH PRISON CAMPS, LARGELY DUE TO MALNUTRITION AND DISEASE"**

# HEROES & LEADERS

Despite its small size, Finland produced many daring generals, soldiers and pilots who successfully took on the might of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany

## CARL GUSTAF EMIL MANNERHEIM

THE MILITARY STATESMAN WHO PRESERVED FINNISH INDEPENDENCE DESPITE ENORMOUS EXTERNAL PRESSURES

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1918-46 RANK: FIELD MARSHAL

Born into a wealthy Finnish family of German-Swedish descent, Mannerheim is often referred to as the 'founding father' of modern Finland, but he began his career in the Imperial Russian Army in 1887, when his native country was still under Romanov rule. He was promoted to colonel during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and became a highly decorated general during WWI. However, after the Russian Revolution in 1917, he formed the first army of a newly independent Finland and during the 1930s constructed defence lines along the south east part of the Finnish-Russian border known as the Mannerheim Line.

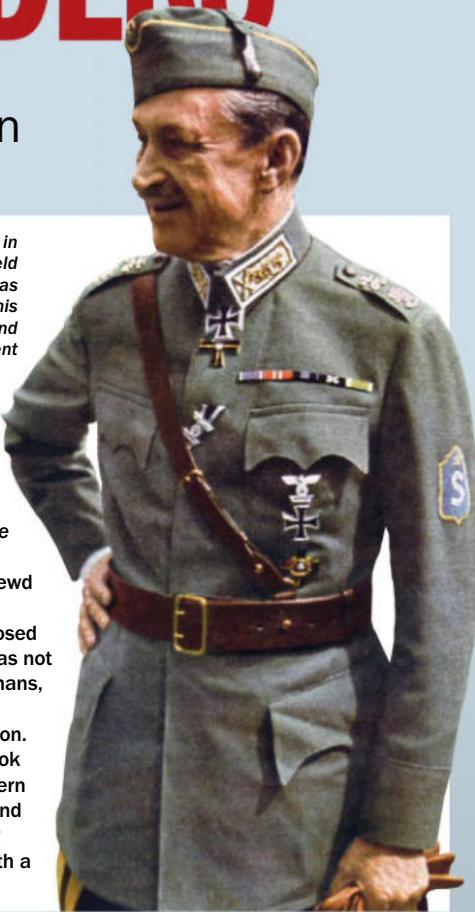
At the outbreak of war in 1939, Mannerheim became commander-in-chief of the Finnish armed forces at the age of 72. During the Winter War, the troops he commanded wreaked considerable damage on the Soviets against all expectations, but Mannerheim was concerned that Finland should not be perceived as pro-German and built up a unique political style that was neither explicitly pro-Axis or pro-Allies.

Mannerheim viewed Finland as fighting virtually alone for its independence and emphasised this to his soldiers saying: "Fortifications, artillery, foreign aid will be of no value unless the ordinary soldier knows that it is he guarding his country."

Despite this patriotic call, Mannerheim was shrewd enough to understand that Finnish independence involved concessions and although the terms imposed on Finland by the USSR were harsh, the country was not occupied. Although Mannerheim disliked the Germans, his pragmatism drove him to make an unofficial alliance with the Nazis to stave off Soviet aggression.

During the Continuation War, his troops even took Soviet territory with the intention of annexing Eastern Karelia. Mannerheim became president in 1944 and managed to negotiate a settlement with the USSR that kept Finland independent, democratic and with a market economy.

*Right: Mannerheim in the uniform of a field marshal in 1942. It was largely thanks to his leadership that Finland remained independent*



## AARNE JUUTILAINEN

THE DEFIDENT EX-LEGIONNAIRE HERO OF KOLLA

YEARS IN SERVICE: 1925-28, 1939-45 RANK: CAPTAIN

Juutilainen joined the Finnish Army in the 1920s as an officer cadet, but soon left and joined the French Foreign Legion where he became known as a bold soldier, fighting Arab rebels in the Atlas Mountains. His experiences led him to be nicknamed 'The Terror of Morocco'. When Juutilainen returned to Finland to fight during the Winter War, he used the guerrilla tactics he had learned in the Foreign Legion to successfully fight the Soviets. As an officer, he commanded 6th Company of the 34th Regiment and counted famous sniper Simo Häyhä among his platoon.

At the Battle of Kollaa, between December 1939 and March 1940, Finnish troops held back enemy forces four times their size. Collapse seemed inevitable but the tenacious fighting of the Finns held the Soviets back for months. When a Finnish general posed the question, "Will Kollaa hold?"

Juutilainen famously replied, "Kollaa will hold, unless we are told to run." Juutilainen's leadership contributed to the Finnish victory in that battle.

*Left: Aarne Juutilainen's bravery at Kollaa symbolised Finnish defiance against Soviet aggression*

## ILMARI JUUTILAINEN

THE OUTSTANDING FIGHTER ACE OF WWII OUTSIDE OF GERMANY

YEARS IN SERVICE: 1932-47  
RANK: WARRANT OFFICER

The younger brother of Aarne Juutilainen, Ilmari was the highest scoring fighter ace of WWII outside of the Luftwaffe. Juutilainen joined the armed forces in 1932 for his compulsory military service and became a pilot in the Finnish Air Force with the rank of sergeant in 24 Lentolaivue (Squadron) from 1935. When the Winter War broke out, Juutilainen scored his first victory in December 1939, but he came into his own during the Continuation War in Brewster Buffalo aircraft. Although this American plane was obsolete in other theatres, it performed well in Finland and Juutilainen claimed 34 aerial combat victories during this period.

Juutilainen's total war record was outstanding. During 437 sorties, he accumulated 94 official combat victories and finished the war without a single hit to his aircraft from enemy fighters. He also never lost a wingman in combat and he intriguingly refused an officer's commission because he feared it would prevent him from flying.



*On 30 June 1944, Juutilainen shot down six Soviet aircraft. On top of his already impressive record, this made him an 'Ace in a Day'*

**"HE FINISHED THE WAR WITHOUT A SINGLE HIT TO HIS AIRCRAFT"**

## SIMO HÄYHÄ

### THE WINTER WAR'S EXCEPTIONALLY DEADLY SNIPER YEARS IN SERVICE: 1925-1940 RANK: CORPORAL

Nicknamed 'White Death', Häyhä is widely regarded to have been the most skilled and successful sniper in any major war, with more than 500 kills to his name. As a member of the Finnish Civil Guard, Häyhä rigorously trained in target practice and in his spare time. He could eventually hit a target 16 times per minute at 152 metres.

From 1939, he served on the Kollaa River, where the Finns would hide off the roads in the wilderness and attack Soviet forces from behind. Häyhä would dress in white winter camouflage, carry a few days' supplies with him and kill any Russians who crossed his path. Remarkably, Häyhä used his rifle's iron sights instead of a scope and in a 100-day period managed to kill 500 Russians at an average rate of five kills a day. He only stopped when he was seriously wounded in the jaw by an explosive round from a counter-sniper (see image inset below).



*In later life, Simo Häyhä summarised his skill as a sniper in a single word, "practice"*



*Hjalmar Siilasvuo (right) had a short temper and could be standoffish, but he was among Finland's most successful generals*

## HJALMAR SIILASVUO

### THE SCOURGE OF SOVIET RUSSIA AND NAZI GERMANY YEARS IN SERVICE: 1918-47 RANK: LIEUTENANT GENERAL

Born in Helsinki, Siilasvuo fought as an officer in WWI with Finnish volunteers in the Imperial German Army. As a colonel during the Winter War in 1940, troops under Siilasvuo's command captured hundreds of cannon and trucks, dozens of tanks and thousands of horses, light weapons and ammunition from the Red Army. Notwithstanding the additional death of thousands of soldiers, the loss to the Soviets was so great that the Soviet High Command executed a number of generals in its aftermath.

Siilasvuo was later given command of Finnish forces fighting in the Lapland War against the Germans between 1944-45. His task was to drive German forces out of the country in the far north into occupied Norway. At the first major engagement between the Finnish and German forces, the Finns won a hard-fought landing at Tornio on the Swedish border. From that point on, the Germans felt the Finns had betrayed them and Siilasvuo continued to lead the successful campaign to eject them from Finland.

**"SIILASVUO'S COMMAND CAPTURED HUNDREDS OF CANNON AND TRUCKS, DOZENS OF TANKS AND THOUSANDS OF HORSES, LIGHT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION FROM THE RED ARMY"**

## LAURI TÖRNI

### THE MORTAL ENEMY OF THE SOVIET UNION SERVED IN THREE ARMIES TO FIGHT THEM YEARS IN SERVICE: 1938-44 RANK: CAPTAIN

Tönni was a daring officer whose lifelong fight against the Soviet Union saw him fight for three countries: Finland, Germany and the United States. He joined the Finnish Army in 1938, but received training as an SS volunteer before returning to Finland as an officer. During the Continuation War, Tönni became famous as a commander of an infantry unit that was nicknamed 'Detachment Tönni'. Otherwise known as the 'Lightning Bolts', this unit would penetrate deep behind enemy lines and inflict such damage on the Red Army that the Soviets placed a bounty of 3,000,000 Finnish marks on Tönni's head.

For his bravery, Tönni was awarded Finland's highest decoration, the Mannerheim Cross, but after peace was made with the Soviets in 1944, Tönni rejoined the SS and led a detachment of German marines until the war's end. He was awarded the Iron Cross and later immigrated to the United States where he joined the US Army. He died fighting in the Vietnam War, but not before receiving a Bronze Star and five Purple Hearts.

*Right: Lauri Tönni as a Finnish lieutenant during the Continuation War. He was the only Finn that the Soviets placed a bounty on between 1939-44*



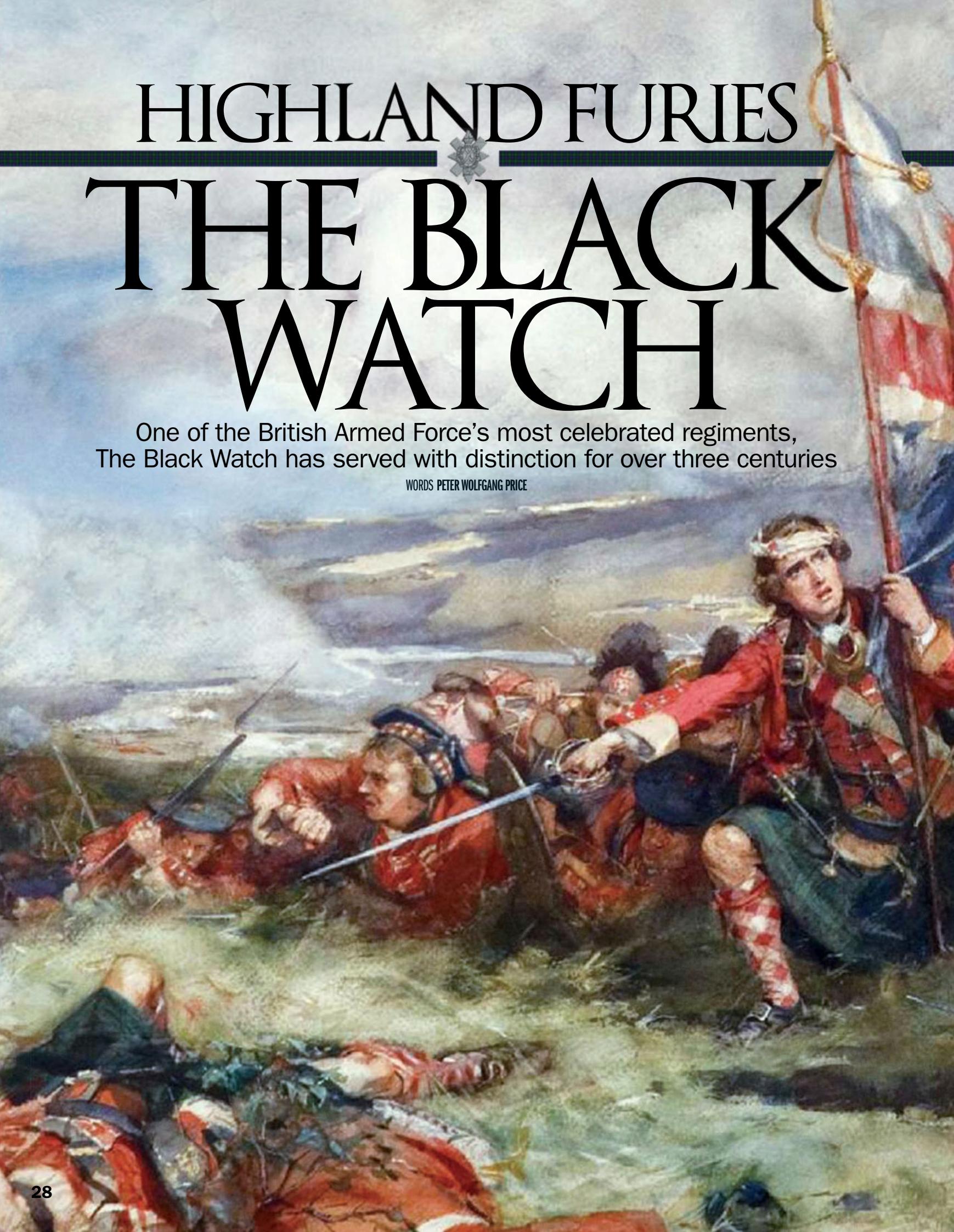
# HIGHLAND FURIES

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# THE BLACK WATCH

One of the British Armed Force's most celebrated regiments,  
The Black Watch has served with distinction for over three centuries

WORDS PETER WOLFGANG PRICE



**H**istorian Tom Devine said: "From the 18th century onwards, the Scottish regiments were the military cutting edge of the British Empire," and this is especially true of The Black Watch, one of Britain's most famous and celebrated military units.

For centuries, The Black Watch has distinguished itself in the line of duty. Since

its inception in the 18th century, the regiment has been at the forefront of almost every major British conflict and battle, including Waterloo, the Boer War, both world wars, Korea, Ireland and recently Afghanistan and Iraq.

These words, recorded as early as 1822 by a regimental historian, reflect the ethos and heritage that is the bedrock of The Black Watch: "In a Highland Regiment, every individual feels that his conduct is the subject of observation and that, independently of his duty, as one member of a systematic whole, he has a separate and individual reputation to sustain, which will be reflected on his family and district or glen."

Here, we present five conflicts, each of which represents the tenacity and fighting spirit that has made The Black Watch famed throughout the world.

### The furies on campaign

The Black Watch, or 42nd Regiment of Foot, would find its first real test on the battlefields of Europe during the Wars of the Austrian Succession, at the Battle of Fontenoy. Sent south from their original posting in the Highlands, the Watch arrived on the continent in 1743, just too late to participate in the Battle of Dettingen.

Billeted in Flanders, the troops would have to wait to prove themselves in combat, but displayed another great quality unusual for some soldiers at the time: discipline. "[The Black Watch] was judged the most trustworthy guard of property, insomuch that the people in Flanders choose to have them always for their protection. Seldom were any of them drunk and they as rarely swore. And the elector-palatine wrote to his envoy in London, desiring him to

**"THE BLACK WATCH WAS JUDGED THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY GUARD OF PROPERTY, INSOMUCH THAT THE PEOPLE IN FLANDERS CHOOSE TO HAVE THEM ALWAYS FOR THEIR PROTECTION"**



## HIGHLAND FURIES

thank the king of Great Britain for the excellent behaviour of the regiment while in his territories in 1743 and 1744, and for whose sake he adds, 'I will always pay a respect and regard to a Scotchman in future'."

By 1745, both the king of France and the Duke of Cumberland were manoeuvring forces in the low country, with the British and their allies intending to break the siege at Tournai. The Black Watch found themselves on active duty again and together with Dutch, Austrian and Hanoverian forces, arrayed to meet the French at Fontenoy.

The enemy deployed their men along the right bank of the Scheldt, from the cover of the wood of Barri to the village of Fontenoy. With barricades being thrown up by both sides, the Scottish and French sharpshooters began a deadly, long-ranged duel. The Black Watch used decoy bonnets on sticks to draw out French fire, whose positions were then targeted with deadly efficiency.

Main contact with the enemy came when the allied forces advanced to clear rogue squads of French troops from their outposts, in preparation for the main attack. 'A party of highlanders was selected to support some Austrian hussars, hotly pressed by French light troops, who were quickly repulsed with loss and the highlanders were taken great notice of for their spirited conduct'.

The Scottish, Dutch and Hanoverian infantry drew up in two lines and at 2pm the order to advance was given. One officer, Sir Robert Munro, had managed to persuade the Duke of Cumberland to let him employ an unorthodox

tactic. Every time the French line fired, his men would 'clap' (drop) to the ground, leaving Robert, whose weight would not allow him to rise again easily, standing alone with the colours. The men would then scramble up and rush the enemy as they reloaded, similar to the dreaded highland charge. This tactic was extremely successful and was employed several times with the regiment excelling in close-quarters fighting; 'Highlanders with sword, pistol and dirk forced them out, killing a considerable number'.

Even though the allies would lose the battle, The Black Watch would ensure that the British fighting spirit was not tarnished, with the French Marshal Saxe describing them: "The Highland furies rushed in upon us with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest."

### Forward the 42nd

The first engagement of the Crimean war, the Battle of Alma, is often overshadowed by other events such as the Battle of Balaclava and the Charge of the Light Brigade. However, it was at Alma that The Black Watch once again showed their worth as professional soldiers.

Embarking at Portsmouth Harbour on 20 May 1854 on the SS Hydaspes, the 42nd travelled to Crimea with a new commanding officer, Sir Colin Campbell, and an additional 27 officers, 40 sergeants, 20 pipers and drummers and 703 rank and file.

Reaching their destination on 20 September, the men bivouacked by the Bulganak River. Roused silently the next morning, they advanced to meet the Russians at Alma. The



Above: Colour Sergeant William Gardner, 42nd Royal Highlanders, c. 1854

general advance was called around 11am with Commander Campbell stating, "This will be a good time for the men to get loose half their cartridges." Cartridges at this time were packed to protect them against damage, unpacking would make reloading much easier during the heat of battle.

By all accounts, The Black Watch were ready for the coming combat. "When the command travelled along the ranks of the Highlanders, it lit up the faces of the men one after the other, assuring them that now after long experience they would go into action. They began obeying the order and with beaming joy, for they became a warlike race, yet not without emotion of a graver kind – they were young soldiers, new to battle."

The Black Watch advance through withering fire to reach the Russians at Alma





Above: Members of the Black Watch pose for photos after returning from the Crimean War

The 42nd were drawn up behind the Light and Second divisions and came under a prolonged 90-minute bombardment from Russian artillery. This fierce cannonade made even veteran soldiers, like Captain Montgomery of the 42nd, comment that he was, "...afraid for the first time in my life and flinched at every shot." The men began to joke around and gave the Russian guns names like 'Maggie' and 'Jessie'. Comments like, 'Look out for a shot from Jessie' or 'Now Maggie's coming', helped ease the frayed nerves.

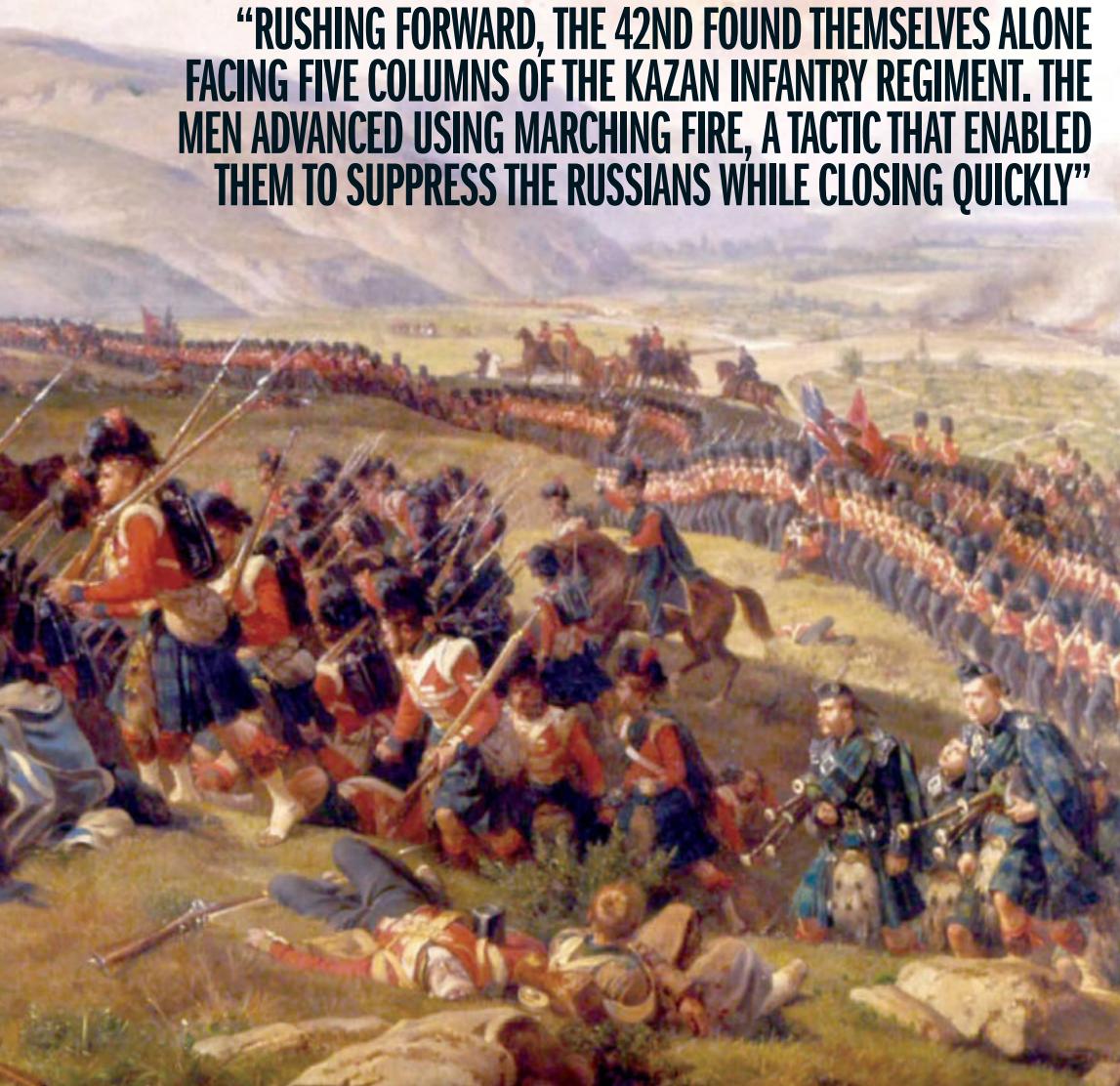
The Light and 2nd Division attacked and carried two Russian gun emplacements, but the victory was short lived and the men were driven back by a large number of Russian infantry. It was at this moment that the 42nd were sent

into the fray to aid these flagging units. As they advanced through the beleaguered divisions they heard, "Ah, let the Scotchmen go on, they don't know what they're going to get."

Rushing forward, the 42nd found themselves alone facing five columns of the Kazan infantry regiment. The men advanced using marching fire, a tactic that enabled them to suppress the Russians while closing quickly on their positions. This type of advance was only executable when troops were highly trained and held their nerve, as the tactic carried a large risk of friendly fire. However, it had the desired effect and the Russian column began to waver and break.

Sir Colin went to report the good news to the army commander, Lord Raglan. He gave

**"RUSHING FORWARD, THE 42ND FOUND THEMSELVES ALONE FACING FIVE COLUMNS OF THE KAZAN INFANTRY REGIMENT. THE MEN ADVANCED USING MARCHING FIRE, A TACTIC THAT ENABLED THEM TO SUPPRESS THE RUSSIANS WHILE CLOSING QUICKLY"**



## AMALGAMATION

NEW DEFENCE BUDGETS SAW THE MERGING OF SCOTLAND'S REGIMENTS AND A POTENTIAL LOSS OF THEIR HERITAGE

The Black Watch has had many iterations through its history. Rising and falling from battalion to regimental strength, its proud heritage has always emerged intact. The latest and most controversial change came in 2006 when, as part of defence budget cuts, all Scottish regiments were amalgamated into the Royal Regiment of Scotland. The Royal Highland Fusiliers, The Royal Scots, King's Own Scottish Borderers, Queen's Own Highlanders, The Gordon Highlanders and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders joined The Black Watch in becoming battalions within the new regiment. The Black Watch makes up the 3rd Battalion or 3 SCOTS as it is also known.

All battalions are allowed to keep their regimental camp badges, tartan, headgear and, for the Watch, the famous Red Hackle. Major General Euan Loudon stated in the re-badging ceremony that "This new regiment of ours will take time to establish its own personality, but those of us who have experienced change before, know that it will do so with rightly placed confidence... What we are not going to do, as we move forward into this new era, is to create an amorphous mass, abandon the regimental system, or see these changes in terms of winners and losers."

Despite these words, many who serve in the armed forces saw the merger as a betrayal. The spokesperson for the Save the Scottish Regiments Campaign said: "The government have betrayed the regimental brotherhood for the sake of saving money. And that's what's so despicable." A local MP also stated, "These regiments served us with such distinction for centuries and have been effectively abolished with a stroke of a pen."

*Below: A former soldier joins hundreds of campaigners in a march through the city of Edinburgh. This protest followed the announcement of the merger in 2004*



an emotional plea for permission to wear a Scottish Bonnet as part of his uniform in tribute to the Highlanders under his command, a request that was granted. After just 35 minutes, the British attack had achieved total victory with limited casualties. Watch casualties numbered 15 dead and 83 wounded.

### 'Ladies from Hell'

During WWI, the Watch took part in the first large-scale British offensive of 1915, the Battle of Loos. This six-division push would overshadow any of the smaller offenses carried out in the spring and would see the first use of poison gas by the British.

The first day of the battle saw the British gain some ground against a fierce German defence. Grinding against the harrowing fire from the entrenched machine guns, Loos itself was captured by the morning and reserves were called up to secure the push on La-Bassee. Although the troops were able to advance unopposed, the lack of officers and visible landmarks meant that many battalions advanced out of position. The 9th battalion of The Black Watch found that their flank defences were absent and so halted for fear of being surrounded. The 8th was also brought up but

**"NEVER HAD THE MACHINE GUNNERS HAD SUCH STRAIGHTFORWARD WORK TO DO, NOR DONE IT SO EFFECTIVELY. THEY TRAVERSED TO AND FRO ALONG THE ENEMY'S RANKS UNCEASINGLY"**

suffered grievous casualties and was forced to withdraw. This was all done under continuous shelling from German artillery positions behind the village.

This confusion on the battlefield would be compounded on the second day as the Germans shored up their defences and the British artillery failed to destroy or decommission reinforced positions. This was partly due to shell shortages and the misdirection of fire. The advance was called against undamaged positions and uncut defensive wire, while men were scythed down by streams of machine gun fire.

The butcher's bill would see more than 60,000 British troops either killed or wounded. Two Black Watch battalions suffered horrendous casualties, with more than 300 killed or wounded. The 9th lost 680, 20 of them officers, in its first-wave assault. The 8th, which was the reserve reinforcements, lost 551.

The casualties for the 4th Battalion were so severe that almost every household in Dundee, where the battalion was raised, was affected by the battle. An annual report of the Dundee Parish Church for 1915 by the Reverend Mr Ferguson, records the sorrow: "Of all the black days that 1915 brought us, the blackest was that day in September, when the news came that practically all the officers and a great number of the men of the 4th Black Watch, Dundee's own, were either killed, wounded or taken prisoner." One Dundee man, Company Sergeant Major Thomas Bowman, was awarded the Military Cross for his actions during the battle and is one of the city's most decorated soldiers.

The Germans would call Loos the 'Field of Corpses', with one regimental diary describing the carnage: "Never had the machine gunners had such straightforward work to do, nor done it so effectively. They traversed to and fro along the enemy's ranks unceasingly."

## ORIGINS OF THE WATCH

### THE BLACK WATCH BEGAN LIFE IN THE 18TH-CENTURY HIGHLANDS IN THE WAKE OF THE OLD PRETENDER'S REBELLION

In 1725, the British government did not have the necessary number of troops to properly police the Highlands after the Jacobite rising of 1715. The response was to raise six 'watch' companies of government soldiers to be stationed throughout the Highlands. They were to maintain order between the warring clans, combat bandits and enforcing anti-Jacobite laws, such a ban on carrying firearms as well as bladed weapons.

These soldiers were given a ten-metre-long plaid kilt of dark tartan to wear as their uniform, which

would become known as the iconic Black Watch Tartan. The tartan may have inspired the name Black Watch as it has a very dark colour. Other theories are that their duty to watch over other Highlanders was seen as a 'black' or odious act after the latest Jacobite rising.

Origins in the colour of tartan is the most believable story, as it would have been the first impression people had of the regiment. The original uniform, described in 1825, was "a scarlet jacket and waistcoat, with buff facings and white

lace, tartan plaid of ten metres, plaited round the middle of the body, the upper part being fixed on the left shoulder, ready to be thrown loose and wrapped over both shoulders and firelock in rainy weather. At night, the plaid served the purpose of a blanket, and was a sufficient covering for the Highlander."

The unit was known as the 42nd Highland Regiment of Foot until 1881, when it was merged with the 73rd Perthshire Regiment of Foot and became the Black Watch Royal Highlanders.

*The Black Watch would keep their iconic uniform of the red coat and kilt for more than a century, pictured here fighting in the Anglo-Egyptian war of 1882*



Although they suffered horrendous losses, The Black Watch left the Germans with a newfound respect for their fighting prowess. The nicknames 'Ladies from hell' or 'kilted troops' were attributed to the Scots after the battle, although there is some disagreement as to whether this was a contemporary name.

### The Forgotten Dunkirk

The Black Watch was at the forefront of Britain's fighting forces in WWII when deployed to France to aid with the German invasion, in 1940. This fulfilled Churchill's promise to "never abandon her ally in her hour of need." With the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) being forced back towards the coast, Churchill placed the 51st Highland Division, which contained the Black Watch and other units, under the command of the French. It was hoped that this move would keep French units fighting as the BEF withdrew and reformed.

This meant the 51st Highland Division would not be evacuated with the majority of the BEF at Dunkirk; rather it was tasked with recapturing the Abbeville bridgehead in the Somme region. Poor co-ordination between British and French artillery, tanks and infantry meant that this push was repulsed on 4 June with heavy casualties.



A soldier of the 7th Battalion, cuts through barbed wire during training

Seizing the initiative, the Germans counterattacked the next day, which saw them outflank and surround the 51st and elements of the French 9th Army Corps, who withdrew to the coastal town of Saint Valéry-en-Caux.

The intention was to evacuate the division from Le Havre much like Dunkirk, but this was met with little success. Elements of the 154th Brigade consisting of the 1st Black Watch and 7th and 8th Argylls, were eventually evacuated safely from Le Havre and Cherbourg after heavy fighting, but were surrounded just like the 51st. The remainder of the division concentrated at Saint Valéry. The conditions were far from ideal for a naval evacuation, however, with fog and later artillery fire hampering the boats' ability to reach the men ashore.

The 4th Black Watch, along with the 2nd and 4th Seaforth Highlanders, 4th Cameron Highlanders and 1st and 5th Gordon Highlanders, was completely surrounded and fast running out of ammunition and supplies. Rommel and his Panzer divisions would overwhelm the beleaguered Scots and on 12 June they surrendered. Around 10,000 men were taken prisoner and marched through Europe, where they would spend the rest of the war as POWs.



Scottish and Indian soldiers share a dugout near to Loos during WWI



A funeral service takes place in the newly liberated 51st Highland Division cemetery at St Valéry, December 1944

## THE PIPES, THE PIPES ARE CALLING

The Pipes and Drums have been an integral part of Scottish Regiments for centuries

Black Watch pipers wear Royal Stewart tartan instead of the Black Watch variety to distinguish them as a member of the pipes and drums, although they are still very much part of the regiment. The red plumed feather he wears on his bonnet is the Red Hackle, a distinct feature of the regiment's uniform. It is thought to have been first adopted onto the bonnets of the regiment in 1795 after brave action during a retreat, but there is evidence that red feathers could have been worn during the American War of Independence. Regardless of its origins, the Black Watch has made the symbol their own and due to other units copying the look, an army order was issued in 1822 for it: "To be used exclusively by the 42nd Regiment." It is now a distinguished mark of the unit and is worn with pride.



This illustration shows a Black Watch piper in full uniform. The regimental Pipe Bands, known as the Pipes and Drums help preserve Scottish and Highland Tradition



**Above:** After the Battle of The Hook, the 1st Battalion relax at a rest centre and wait to be transported back to the front

The Black Watch continue to serve in frontline operations. Here, soldiers from 1 Platoon, A Company, disembark from their Chinook helicopter to purge narcotics factories in Afghanistan



**Right:** Wreckage of UN jeeps on "The Hook". Centurion tanks were forced to crush the vehicles in their haste to aid the Black Watch

Pipers of the Black Watch while serving with the 1st Commonwealth Division during the Korean War, 29th June 1953



In Churchill's minutes from the war cabinet on 12 June 1940, he stated: "The French had let us down badly. They had not allowed the 51st Division to retire to Rouen, and then kept it waiting until it was no longer possible for it to reach Havre. Finally they had compelled it to capitulate with their own troops."

Despite this statement, there are some who think that Churchill allowed the 51st to be captured. He had hoped to have the French save the division but stopped short, ordering his allies to do so for fear of upsetting them. The retreat of the 51st division might also have affected the morale of the French units still fighting. Whatever the truth, the 'forgotten Dunkirk' is controversial among historians.

After the 51st was captured, the Territorial 9th Highland Division was re-named the 51st Highland Division, with those units who escaped being incorporated back in. The newly formed division would go on to distinguish itself in North Africa, Italy and in 1944, found satisfaction as being the unit that liberated Saint Valéry.

### Battle of the Hook

In 1952, the men of the 1st Battalion Black Watch stood to attention at Camp Crail, Fife, as the Queen Mother inspected them and imparted a farewell speech. The rousing cheers that followed were a fitting start to mark the 21st active deployment of the regiment in an overseas conflict, as they embarked to serve in the Korean War.

After travelling halfway around the world, the 1st Battalion proceeded to their positions on Hill 355, known as the Hook, in

## "WE KNOW THE BLACK WATCH HAVE TAKEN OVER FROM THE AMERICANS BUT IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE"

early November; relieving the battered and bruised US 7th marines. The Hook was a crescent shaped ridge that lay in a valuable tactical position that the Chinese were intent on capturing.

The area The Black Watch took over was in a sorry state after previous Chinese attacks and so orders were given to start digging and improving the trenches. Firing positions needed to be covered and night outposts strengthened for observation. The general grumbling that followed orders like this was expected, as the temperatures at night would often fall below freezing, making the ground tough and hard to dig. This foresight ensured that the 1st Battalion was well entrenched for the coming attacks.

Chinese intelligence already knew about the change in units and began broadcasting propaganda messages, "We know the Black Watch have taken over from the Americans but it won't make any difference." They kept a close watch on the two major standing patrol positions, Ronson and Warsaw, covering the main advance to the Hook.

On the night of the 18 November, a ferocious bombardment was unleashed on The Black Watch's positions, followed by two companies of Chinese infantry assaulting the Hook. All the preparation had paid off as Corporal Wilson of 1st platoon recalls, "When the heavy bombardment started, we made for our tunnels

as ordered by Lieutenant Black. This barrage was exceptionally heavy."

Wave after wave of attackers was repulsed and by midnight, the charge looked to be dying down. Running extremely low on ammunition and supplies, the men of the 1st Battalion could only stay in their trenches and fight for their lives. With a blaring of bugles, the Chinese once again attacked shortly after midnight. The situation was so desperate that the battalion was forced to call down friendly artillery on its own position, hoping that their trenches would protect them from the exploding shells overhead.

The battalion's searchlights were extremely useful as they illuminated the enemy for small arms and artillery fire. With some of these lights being knocked out, the Chinese were becoming increasingly more difficult to target. The reinforcements that were sent in came in the form of the B Squadron, 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoons, whose Centurion tanks were a welcome sight.

After spending the rest of the night fighting off progressively weaker attacks, the battle was considered over by 9.30am. The Black Watch had stood firm in the face of insurmountable odds and emerged victorious. The battalion had lost 107 men from the encounter; 16 were killed or fatally wounded, 76 were wounded and 15 were missing, presumed POWs. A single Centurion tank was also lost to Bazooka fire. For the defence of the Hook, the regiment gained its 151st battle honour.



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# JAPAN'S FIRST STRIKE

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

Imperial planning and preparation for the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor began months before the Sunday morning aerial assault



# "THE RISE OR FALL OF THE EMPIRE DEPENDS ON THIS BATTLE. EVERYONE WILL DO HIS DUTY TO THE UTMOST"

- ADMIRAL ISOROKU YAMAMOTO, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE COMBINED FLEET



**J**ust before sunrise on Sunday 7 December 1941, six aircraft carriers of the Imperial Japanese Navy's First Air Fleet under the command of Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, turned into the wind, ready to launch a powerful striking force of 353 aircraft.

Nagumo's flagship, Akagi, and her consorts, Kaga, Soryu, Hiryu, Shokaku and Zuikaku, set in motion the marauding strike force that would plunge the Pacific into World War II. Its target was the US Navy's Pacific Fleet, which was anchored at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu in the territory of Hawaii. Other US Navy and Army installations on the island, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Bellows Field, Ewa Marine Corps Air Station, and the naval air stations at Kaneohe and on Ford Island in the heart of Pearl Harbor were to be hit as well.

The opening blow was intended to cripple the American military presence in the Pacific; allow the Japanese armed forces to seize and consolidate strategic gains throughout the region; and bring the US government to the negotiating table where Japan would dictate favourable terms of an armistice. To that end, the Pearl Harbor raid was co-ordinated with attacks on the Philippines, Wake Island, Midway Atoll and Malaya.

The gambit was all or nothing for Japan. Although senior Japanese commanders were confident of swift victory, at least some of them acknowledged that a prolonged war with the United States was a daunting prospect, considering the industrial might and resources at the disposal of their adversary. Years of rising militarism and imperialism in Japan had placed the island nation on a collision course with the United States, a preeminent power in the Pacific since the Spanish-American War. Japan's provocative military moves on the Asian mainland, particularly the occupation of the Chinese region of Manchuria and later of French Indochina, had brought the two nations to loggerheads. While negotiations were continuing, most observers on either side of the Pacific believed war was inevitable.

## The British influence

At 9pm on the evening prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, Nagumo ordered all hands aboard the Akagi to attention. He solemnly read a message from Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet. "The rise or fall of the empire depends on this battle. Everyone will do his duty to the utmost."

Yamamoto meant the communication not only as an encouragement to the Japanese sailors and airmen, but also as homage to naval esprit de corps. During the decades preceding World War II, the Imperial Japanese Navy had embarked on a lengthy program of expansion, modernising and modelling itself on the finest naval tradition in the world – the British Royal Navy. The message from Yamamoto echoed one similarly flashed by Admiral Horatio Nelson, one of the greatest heroes in the history of the Royal Navy, prior to the epic battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Japanese respect for the Royal Navy ran deep. Since the turn of the 20th century, some vessels of the imperial fleet had actually been constructed in British and French shipyards,

## "BOLSTERED BY THE BRITISH SUCCESS, THE STAFF OF THE COMBINED FLEET BEGAN WITH RENEWED PURPOSE IN JANUARY 1941, TO PLAN FOR JUST SUCH A BOLD STROKE"

while Japanese training, operational standards, uniforms and rank insignia were similar to those of the British.

Following the outbreak of war in Europe, the Royal Navy again served as a role model for the Japanese. On the night of 11 November 1940, Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers of the Fleet Air Arm flew from the deck of the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious in the Mediterranean Sea and attacked the Italian naval anchorage at Taranto. The 21 obsolescent British biplanes sank one Italian battleship and damaged two others.

For the Japanese, the idea of a preemptive raid on Pearl Harbor had been discussed, tested during war games and shelved several times during the years between the world wars. However, bolstered by the British success, the staff of the Combined Fleet began, with renewed purpose in January 1941, to plan for just such a bold stroke. Lieutenant Commander Minoru Genda, one of the best known and most respected aviators in the Japanese armed forces, had observed American carriers operating in a unified, single strike force and attended war games in 1936, during which an offensive scenario against Pearl Harbor had ended in simulated disaster for the attacker. Still, Genda remained one of a relative few

Japanese officers who believed it was possible for a carrier task force to successfully deliver a stunning blow against an enemy fleet at anchor.

As Japanese aircraft carrier strength reached sufficient levels to support a Pearl Harbor attack, Yamamoto instructed Admiral Takajiro Onishi, chief of staff of the Eleventh Air Fleet, to order Genda to evaluate the potential for success with, "...special attention to the feasibility of the operation, method of execution and the forces to be used." Yamamoto was reluctant to go to war with the US, however, he strongly believed that a substantial and successful first strike at the Pacific Fleet was the only option to bring such a conflict to a rapid and favourable conclusion for Japan.

Yamamoto's assertion that Pearl Harbor should be Japan's target actually reversed traditional thinking at the highest command levels within the Imperial Navy. Although the army had been active on the Asian continent, naval doctrine had previously assumed a defensive posture. In the autumn of 1940, Yamamoto's assertion became an ultimatum. He eventually threatened to resign if senior commanders within the Combined Fleet refused to support the proposal.



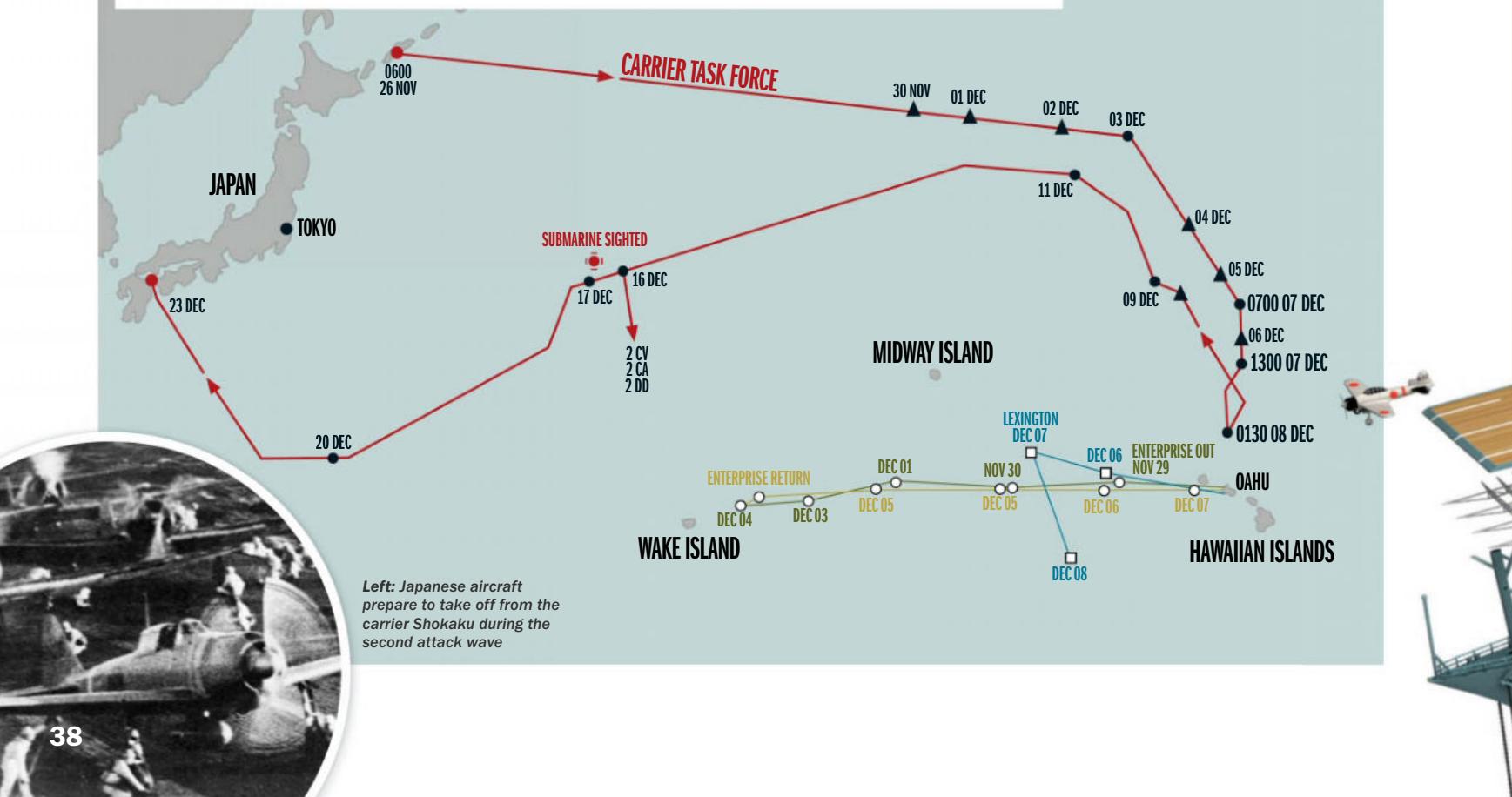
Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo led the First Air Fleet during the Pearl Harbor operation, but later lost his command

### The blueprints for war

By the following August, the basic plan for the Pearl Harbor attack had been approved. The six aircraft carriers of the First Air Fleet were to be accompanied by an armada of two battleships, two heavy cruisers, a light cruiser, nine destroyers, three submarines and eight tankers – a total of 31 vessels – sailing from their rendezvous point at Hitokappu Bay in the Kurile

## JAPANESE RAIDER ROUTE

The six Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers and their escorting ships of the First Air Fleet departed the friendly waters of the Kurile Islands on 26 November 1941, sailing a northern route well away from standard merchant shipping lanes and maintaining strict radio silence. Rough seas and intermittent heavy rain cloaked the warships at times as they turned south east towards a point 370 kilometres north of Oahu to launch the aerial strike force that devastated Pearl Harbor on 7 December.



# IMPERIAL WAR MACHINES

THE JAPANESE ARMED FORCES EMPLOYED THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE DURING THE OPENING PHASE OF WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC

## MITSUBISHI A6M ZERO FIGHTER

For a time, the Mitsubishi Zero reigned supreme as the finest carrier-based fighter aircraft in the Pacific. Developed in the 1930s, it was already reputed as a highly manoeuvrable, heavily armed and deadly opponent by the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. However, the Zero was also vulnerable. Its design sacrificed armour and self-sealing gasoline tanks to achieve remarkable performance.



## MIDGET SUBMARINE

Two-man Japanese midget submarines were developed to provide stealthy offensive capability. Amid cramped quarters, crewmen manoeuvred their craft, armed with a pair of torpedoes, into position to fire on enemy ships. At Pearl Harbor, all five midget submarines were lost. One was captured intact after it beached and its commander became the first prisoner of the Americans during World War II.

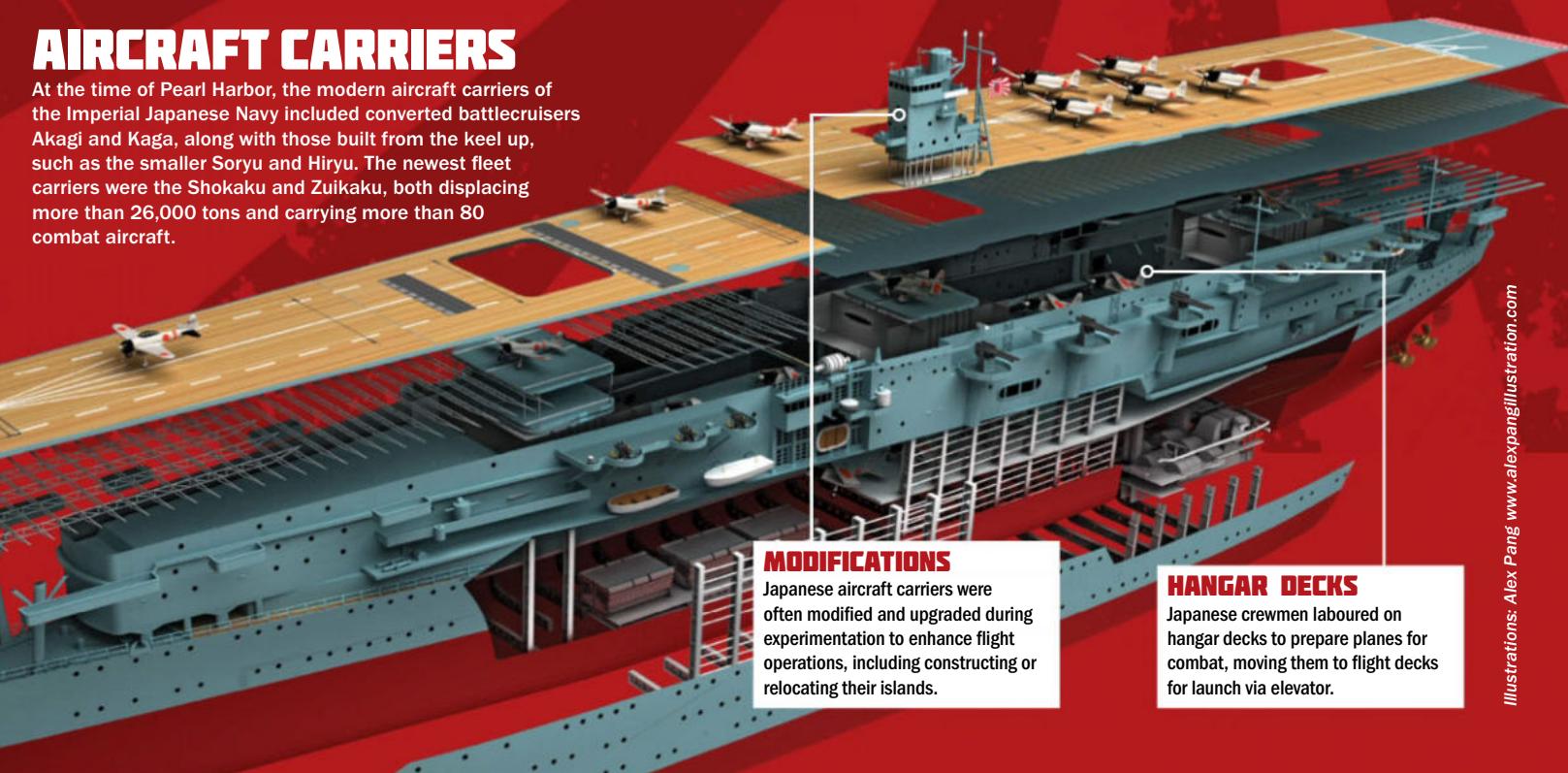
## AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

At the time of Pearl Harbor, the modern aircraft carriers of the Imperial Japanese Navy included converted battlecruisers Akagi and Kaga, along with those built from the keel up, such as the smaller Soryu and Hiryu. The newest fleet carriers were the Shokaku and Zuikaku, both displacing more than 26,000 tons and carrying more than 80 combat aircraft.

### TORPEDOES

Japanese midget submarines carried a pair of lethal torpedoes that protruded from the tubes located in the small submersible's bow.

**"AT PEARL HARBOR,  
ALL FIVE MIDGET  
SUBMARINES WERE LOST"**



Islands. The fleet was to sail on 26 November; take a northerly course, in order to avoid the busy Pacific trade routes and merchant shipping that plied the ocean; maintain strict radio silence; and launch its aircraft in two waves from a position 370 kilometres north of Oahu. The tentative date for the attack was designated as 7 December 1941. A cordon of fleet submarines was positioned around Oahu to provide early warning of American ship movements and attack any US Navy vessels that might be at sea near the harbour. Five midget submarines were to be launched from their mother submarines hours before the aerial attack, with the hope that they might infiltrate Pearl Harbor and launch torpedoes at anchored vessels of the Pacific Fleet.

Early in September, senior Japanese officers convened at the Naval War College in Tokyo and finalised the plans for the attack. One month later, senior pilots who would assume command of air groups were informed of the target against which they had been training so rigorously. They already had some idea of its nature, since the torpedo groups had worked to perfect their runs against capital ships anchored in shallow waters.

Combined Fleet Top Secret Operational Order No 1 was issued on 5 November, followed 48 hours later by Order No 2, authorising the fleet



*The battleship USS Pennsylvania lies behind the battered destroyers, Cassin and Downes, in dry dock at Pearl Harbor*

## NAVAL AIR JUGGERNAUT

THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY OBSERVED WESTERN ADVANCES IN NAVAL AVIATION AND WELCOMED MILITARY ENVOYS TO CONSULT AND TRAIN ITS PILOTS

The British Royal Navy pioneered many aspects of the development of naval aviation in the early 20th century and Japanese naval observers also recognised its potential.

Intent on emulating the Royal Navy's successes, the Japanese received a British mission headed by Captain William Sempill in the autumn of 1921. Sempill led 29 air operations instructors charged with assisting the development of the Japanese naval aviation program. By 1922, the Japanese had also constructed the Hosho, the world's first

aircraft carrier purpose-built, rather than converted from another ship type.

Sempill, who was later exposed as a spy for the Japanese, hoped to secure substantial sales of British arms to Japan in exchange for valuable expertise and advice. His team brought the blueprints of the most advanced British carrier designs, protocols involving elements such as pilot training; the launch and recovery of aircraft; refuelling and maintenance; and airborne operations. The British trained the young Japanese

pilots in the latest Royal Navy aircraft, such as the Gloster Sparrowhawk fighter, along with torpedo bombers and dive bombers. They introduced torpedo tactics to the Imperial Navy as well.

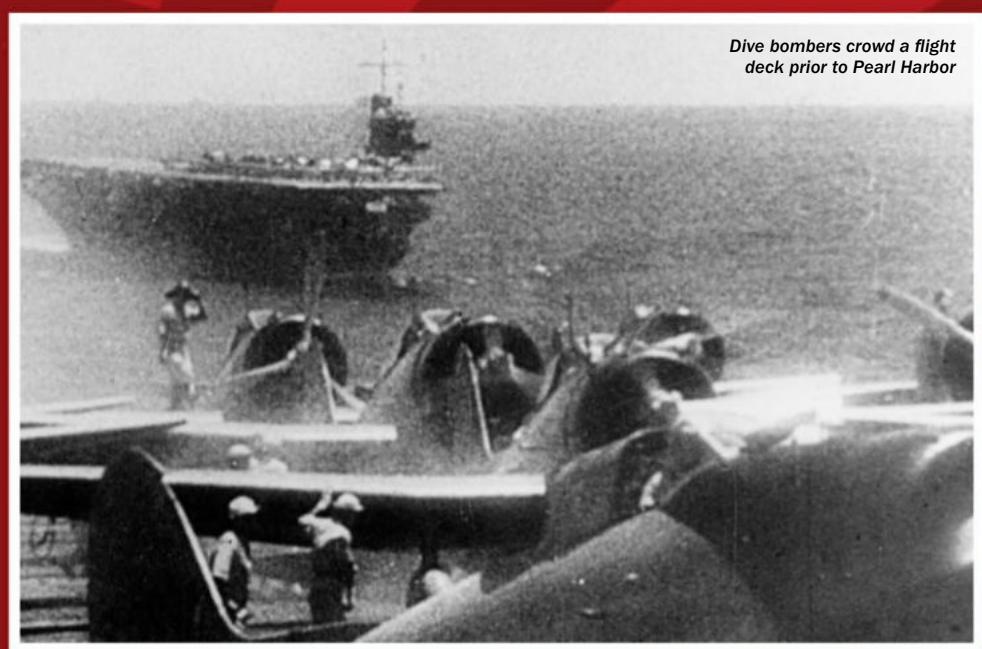
Japanese engineers and designers experimented with their own ordnance and aircraft, several of which were patterned after British types, and perfected carrier operations and doctrine during the 1920s and 1930s.

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Lieutenant Commander Takeshi Naito, a naval attaché in Berlin, travelled to the port of Taranto, Italy, where the British had executed a successful attack against the Italian Fleet at anchor in November 1940. With the assistance of the Italian Navy, Naito assessed the dynamics of the Taranto raid and advised the Pearl Harbor planners on modifications to existing tactics. Eventually, wooden stabilising fins were attached to Japanese aerial torpedoes, allowing them to run true in Pearl Harbor's shallow waters.

*Below: Type 91 Kai 2 torpedoes on the flight deck of the Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carrier, Akagi. The carrier is at Hitokappu Bay in the Kuriles just prior to departing for the attack on Pearl Harbor*



**"SEMPILL, WHO WAS LATER EXPOSED AS A SPY FOR THE JAPANESE, HOPED TO SECURE SUBSTANTIAL SALES OF BRITISH ARMS TO JAPAN"**



to weigh anchor at the end of the month and to execute the attack on Pearl Harbor.

When the fleet set sail, Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura and Special Envoy Saburo Kurusu were in Washington, DC, conducting last-ditch negotiations with Secretary of State Cordell Hull and President Franklin D Roosevelt. These negotiations were expected to fail, and when the impasse was reached, specific orders to launch the attack would be issued to Nagumo at sea. At the same time, the envoys, oblivious to the details of the Pearl Harbor attack, were instructed to deliver a message to the US government, officially terminating the negotiations. The government in Tokyo considered this diplomatic step essentially a declaration of war, timed for a half hour before the Japanese aircraft appeared in the sky above Pearl Harbor.

Lieutenant Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, leader of the air groups of the First Air Fleet, was assigned the task of allocating aircraft to specific targets, organising the two waves of

planes to co-ordinate their attacks and allotting fighter protection against any defending American planes that might make it into the sky to give battle. Fuchida assigned 185 aircraft to the first wave. It consisted of 49 Nakajima B5N 'Kate' bombers carrying armour-piercing bombs, 40 Kates with aerial torpedoes, 51 Aichi D3A 'Val' dive bombers with general purpose bombs and 45 superb Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters to provide escort and strafe targets of opportunity.

While the Kates hit the warships anchored in Pearl Harbor, 25 Vals were designated to blast the primary American fighter base at Wheeler Field. 17 Vals were assigned to destroy Ford Island's patrol plane and fighter base and nine were to strike American bombers based at Hickam Field. The second wave included 54 Kates armed with 550 and 125-pound bombs to demolish installations and crater runways at the airfields, 80 Vals with 550-pound bombs to renew the attacks on the warships in the harbour and 36 marauding Zeroes.

Fuchida received an intelligence message from a Japanese spy on Oahu the day before the attack was launched. It was tinged both with optimism that the element of surprise would be achieved and disappointment that the three American aircraft carriers, Enterprise, Lexington and Saratoga were not present at the anchorage. It read, "No balloons, no torpedo defence nets deployed around battleships in Pearl Harbor. All battleships are in. No indications from enemy radio activity that ocean patrol flights being made in Hawaiian area. Lexington left harbour yesterday. Enterprise also thought to be operating at sea."

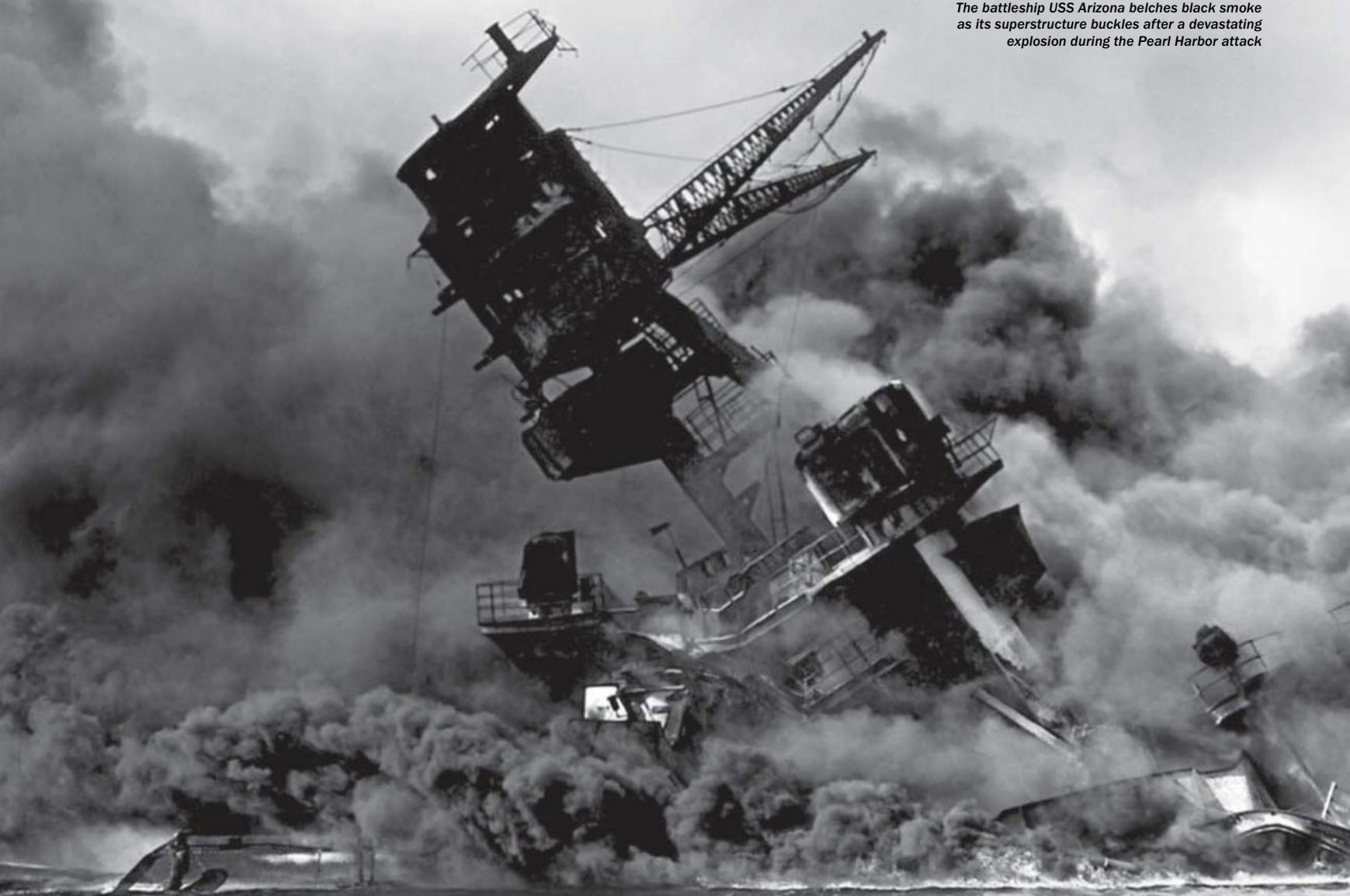
The Saratoga was steaming into the harbour at San Diego, California when the Japanese attackers arrived above Pearl Harbor on 7 December. Although the aircraft carriers were absent, there was no turning back. The attack had to proceed as ordered and the Japanese rationalised that the remaining targets, particularly the US battleships, were high value enough to justify the risk being undertaken.

### "Tora! Tora! Tora!"

As the sky was still dark over the deck of the Akagi, pitched in rough seas, a green lamp was waved in a circle and the first Zero fighter roared down the flight deck into the air. Within 15 minutes, the entire first wave was airborne.

*The battleship USS Arizona belches black smoke as its superstructure buckles after a devastating explosion during the Pearl Harbor attack*

## "WHILE THE KATES HIT THE WARSHIPS ANCHORED IN PEARL HARBOR, 25 VALS WERE DESIGNATED TO BLAST THE PRIMARY AMERICAN FIGHTER BASE AT WHEELER FIELD"



# A DAY OF INFAMY

DESPITE THE SUCCESS OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, ADMIRAL YAMAMOTO CORRECTLY SURMISED THAT IT WAS INCOMPLETE

As soon as Lieutenant Commander Mitsuo Fuchida was back aboard the Akagi, the leader of the Pearl Harbor strike reported to Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo on the carrier's bridge. Fuchida is said to have begged his commander to launch another attack.

Nagumo declined. The risk was too great and so he ordered the First Air Fleet to retire. When news of the successful attack reached Tokyo, citizens took to the streets in celebration. The highest echelons of the military exuded optimism.

However, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, architect of the raid, brooded. The American carriers had not been destroyed. Retribution would soon come. He had once warned fellow officers, "If I am told to fight regardless of the consequences, I shall run wild for the first six months or a year but I have utterly no confidence for the second or third year."

Pearl Harbor had been a tremendous tactical victory. The US Pacific Fleet was crippled but Yamamoto's words proved prophetic. Machine shops, repair facilities and stockpiles of fuel and oil were untouched. The submarine base was operational. The Americans recovered rapidly and just six months after Pearl Harbor, four of the Japanese carriers that had executed the raid were sunk by American planes at the Battle of Midway.

**"IF I AM TOLD TO FIGHT REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES, I SHALL RUN WILD FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR BUT I HAVE UTTERLY NO CONFIDENCE FOR THE SECOND OR THIRD YEAR"**



Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto envisioned a bleak future for the Japanese nation in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack



Photographed 10 days after it crashed during the Pearl Harbor attack, the Zero of Petty Officer Shigenori Nishikaichi lies derelict



After a mission in the Solomon Islands, Aichi D3A Val dive bombers return to the aircraft carrier Shokaku



Below: A Japanese Mitsubishi Zero fighter roars off the flight deck of the aircraft carrier Akagi en route to Pearl Harbor

At 7.40am, the north shore of Oahu came into view. Fuchida was exultant. He radioed "Tora! Tora! Tora!" to the anxious Nagumo, signifying that complete surprise had been achieved. For several hours, the attackers wrought devastation on their targets below.

Elsewhere in the Pacific, Japanese forces moved aggressively in concert with the Pearl Harbor attack, reaching for objectives that would minimise US interference with coming operations to seize the Dutch East Indies, secure vital resources such as oil and rubber for their war machine and extend their defensive perimeter further into the expanse of the great ocean.

As the attack got underway in Hawaii, word was flashed to Midway Atoll at 6.30am local time on 7 December. The Marine garrison went on high alert and by dusk, the Japanese had arrived. Two Imperial Navy destroyers, the Akebono and Ushio, were sighted as they prepared to shell the installations on Midway.

War came to the atoll at 9.35pm, as Japanese 13-centimetre shells crashed on Sand and Eastern Islands, the two spits of land that, within months, would become the epicentre of World War II in the Pacific. As the destroyers cruised back and forth, the Marine guns responded with seven and 13-centimetre rounds. Japanese shells set the large seaplane hangar ablaze. One enemy round scored a direct hit on the concrete structure that housed the Sand Island powerplant, smashing through an air intake and mortally wounding a young Marine officer, 1st Lieutenant George H Cannon, who refused to leave his post for medical treatment and later received a posthumous Medal of Honor.

The Midway battle lasted for about half an hour and Marine gunners claimed to have scored hits on at least one enemy destroyer, which was seen belching smoke and flame. When the Japanese finally withdrew, four

Americans were dead and 10 wounded. 36 Japanese bombers hit Wake Island on the morning of 8 December (across the International Date Line), destroying a dozen Grumman F4F Wildcat fighters on the ground. Meanwhile, Japanese troops landed at Kota Bharu on the coast of Malaya while the Pearl Harbor attack force was in the air. Within hours of the strike against Pearl, Japanese bombers hit Clark Field and other installations in the Philippines, catching American planes on the ground again.

Shocked and bloodied, the United States was suddenly at war. For a time, Japanese domination of the Pacific was virtually uncontested, but just as Yamamoto feared, a protracted conflict, one that Japan could not win, emerged. Even as Allied forces turned the tide and fought their way inexorably to Tokyo Bay and victory in 1945, the spectre of Pearl Harbor haunted the Americans.

While conspiracy theories have surfaced in the three-quarters of a century since the 'Day of Infamy', these remain the topic of heated debate and conjecture. Some revisionist historians have reviewed all the proof they need to conclude that President Roosevelt and other high-ranking Allied civilian leaders and military officers – even British Prime Minister Winston Churchill – were aware that the attacks on Pearl Harbor and other locations were coming. However, the 'case' will probably never be closed.

On the tactical level, the Americans received several warnings of the Japanese air armada approaching Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 – an encounter with a midget submarine and a radar sighting at Opana above Kahuku Point on the north shore, for instance. An open question remains as to whether American commanders in Hawaii should have taken action to improve preparedness and should have been more responsive to the signs of imminent attack on that fateful Sunday morning.



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## THE BLONDE KNIGHT

by ROBERT TAYLOR

*Flying with I/JG-53, Erich Hartmann returns to base after another mission against advancing Russian forces, February 1945. Hartmann finished WWII as the highest-scoring Ace in history with 352 victories.*

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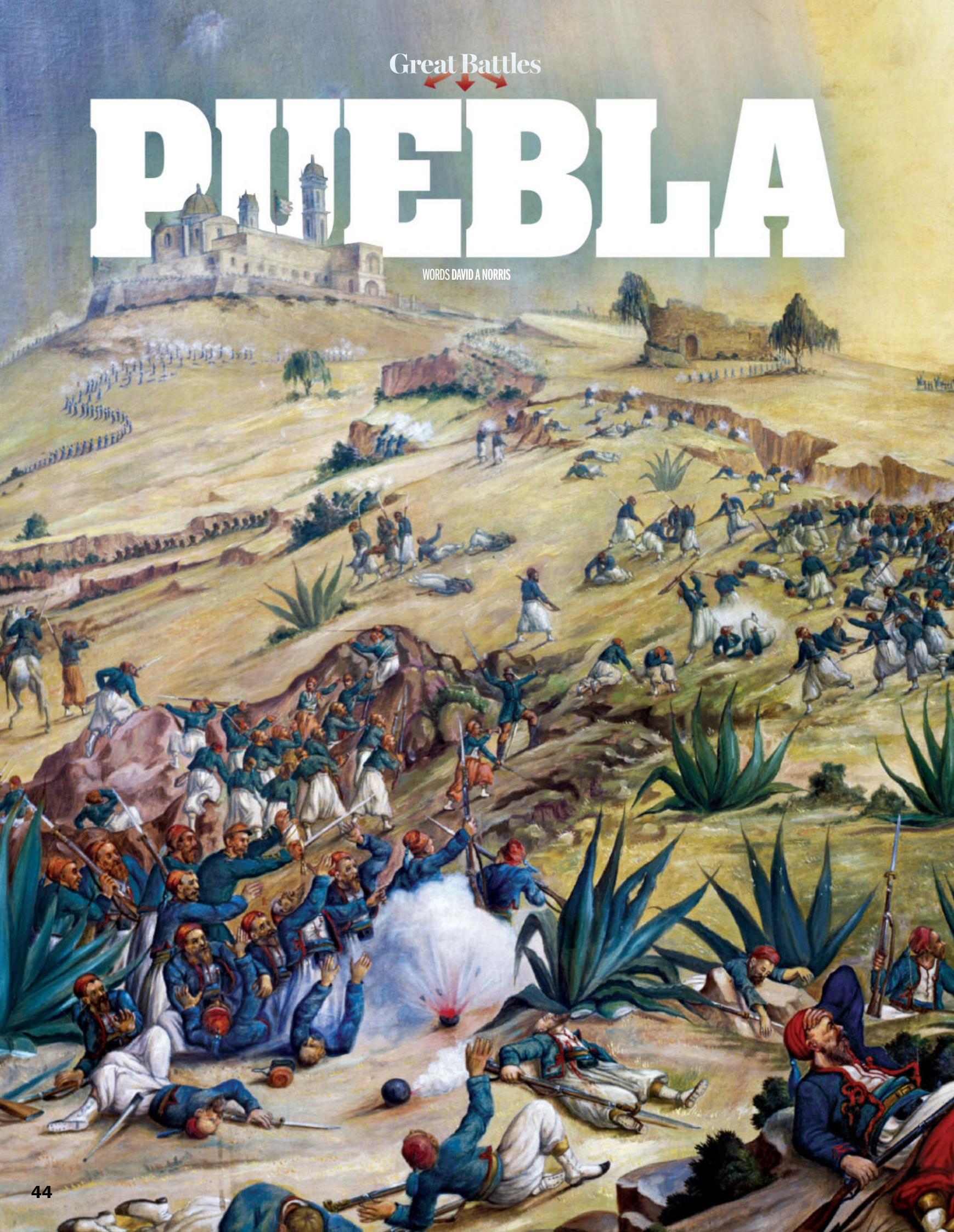


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Great Battles

# PUEBLA

WORDS DAVID A NORRIS



Three times Lorenz's forces were repulsed from Fort Guadalupe, a colonial church converted into a fortress. From this angle, the Mexican-held Fort Loreto and lines of earthworks filled with infantry, were not visible to the attackers until they drew closer

## OPPOSING FORCES



### MEXICAN FORCES

#### LEADERS

General Ignacio Seguin Zaragoza

#### INFANTRY

4,300

#### CAVALRY

550

#### ARTILLERY

2x field batteries,  
10x 24-pounders and  
several 12-pounder  
mountain howitzers

VS



### FRENCH ARMY

#### LEADERS

Major General Charles Ferdinand Latrille, Comte de Lorenz

#### INFANTRY

5,350

#### CAVALRY

200

#### ARTILLERY

450x personnel,  
16x field guns

## PUEBLA, MEXICO 5 MAY 1862

Outnumbered Mexican troops shocked the world by turning back the Imperial troops of Emperor Napoleon III

The 2nd Zouave Regiment wavered as grapeshot, shell and musket balls cut through their ranks. It was as hot as any fire these veteran Frenchmen had ever seen, even in the battlefields of the Crimean War or Italy. Two forts, linked by a line of entrenchments, barred them from their objective: Puebla.

Then to their right, dust rose in the distance as a body of cavalry rushed towards them. Their banners identified them as followers of Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, a Mexican ally of the 1860s French Expeditionary Force in Mexico. Amid the swirling smoke and chaos of the battlefield, Zouaves heard voices crying, "Almonte! Almonte!" The Zouaves shouted, "We're saved!" as they opened their ranks to let in their reinforcements. However, all too soon they realised their mistake. The enemy cavalry of General Antonio Alvarez hacked their way through the French. It was the crowning misfortune to befall their army at the Battle of Puebla on 5 May 1862.

### The French intervention

A 'perfect storm' of internal strife and foreign invasion battered Mexico in late 1861. In the 1850s, a liberal movement called La Reforma gained power and for the first time, giving the poor a voice in their own affairs. Conservative elements allied with the church and the aristocracy captured Mexico City, driving the government from the capital, beginning the War of the Reform in 1858. Under President Benito Juárez, the liberals won the war in December 1860. With Mexico's economy in ruins, Juárez halted payments on the nation's foreign debt.

Reactionaries soon saw an opportunity for regaining power with the help of foreign troops, as Mexico's main debtors were France, Spain and Great Britain. On 31 October 1861, these three powers signed a treaty in London, agreeing to send land and naval forces to Mexico. Allegedly, they would seize the customs house at Vera Cruz and leave once they had extracted the money owed to them through Mexico's customs revenues. Normally, a European invasion of Mexico would risk war with the United States, but with the country entangled in the American Civil War, Washington could only sputter a protest against this violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

Spanish troops transferred from Cuba landed in Mexico during December 1861 and were soon joined by French soldiers and a small British force. Spain and Great Britain soon withdrew after they realised that the French emperor, Napoleon III, intended to conquer Mexico and turn it into a monarchy. At Córdoba on April 19, the reactionaries rose up and



proclaimed General Juan Almonte the rightful president of Mexico. They sought French help in driving out the Juárez government. Almonte's adherents promised the French that the people of Mexico welcomed them as liberators, and would strew flowers at their feet.

By April 1862, the French Expeditionary Force had left the fever-ridden lowlands of Vera Cruz for the healthier climate of Orizaba, about 128 kilometres by road from the coast. Major General Charles Ferdinand Latrille, Comte de Lorencez, took command of the army.

Born in 1814, Lorencez was the son of one of Napoleon Bonaparte's major generals. After service in Algeria, he rose to the rank of major general during the Crimean War. Gustave Paul Cluseret, a French officer who served with Lorencez in the Crimea said of him, "I never saw a man so fastidious about discipline, so haughty and so little beloved by his soldiers."

Supremely confident at the head of a modern European army, Lorencez held no regard for the Mexican forces. He wrote to the war ministry on April 26, "In race, in organisation, in discipline and in morals, we are so far superior to the Mexicans that, with 6,000 soldiers at my disposal, I am the master of Mexico."

*Left: Zouave were light infantry regiments in the French Army, raised in French North Africa*

*Below: The French advance on Puebla as pictured in a weekly French periodical, 1863*

Certainly some Mexican units of state troops or militia were so poorly equipped that the soldiers wore their own civilian clothing and were armed with machetes rather than muskets. Regular soldiers usually bore modern rifle muskets, but the auxiliary soldiers made do with old percussion smoothbores or even antique ex-British Brown Bess flintlocks. However, the French little realised that the Mexican army had a wealth of skilled leaders. Some commanders and line officers had seen combat against the Americans during the US-Mexican War of 1846-48.

Some younger officers had also learned their skills in Mexico's recent civil war. The chief among them was General Ignacio Seguín Zaragoza, commander of Mexico's Army of the East (Ejército de Oriente). 32 years old, Zaragoza was born in Texas before that region won independence from Mexico. After studying for the priesthood, he left the seminary and eventually became a soldier during the civil strife of the 1850s. Zaragoza was devoted to 'liberty and reform'. He could not be spared from the army even for his marriage ceremony, so his brother stood in as his proxy at the wedding. Zaragoza became minister of war and marine, but after the French invasion, he resigned to take command of the army in the field.

### The road to Cinco de Mayo

On April 27, Lorencez marched west from Orizaba to capture Mexico City. Most of his troops were infantry: the 99th Regiment of Line; the 2nd Zouave Regiment; the 1st Battalion, Chasseurs à Pied; the 1st Regiment, Marine Infantry; and the 2nd Battalion, Marine Fusiliers. There were three batteries, one from the army and two of marine artillery, with a combined 16 field guns. About 200 horsemen – the 2nd squadron of the 2nd Chasseurs d'Afrique – made up the cavalry contingent. Adding officer's mounts and the supply and artillery trains, the expedition's four veterinary officers had 900 horses and mules in their care. The trains carried 200,000 food rations and 400,000 rations of wine.

To take Mexico City, the French had to take Puebla, about 160 kilometres west of Orizaba. With a population of 75,000, Puebla was Mexico's second-largest city. Zaragoza gathered his forces there to block the invaders, however, not everyone there wanted his help; Puebla was a centre of reactionary politics and many of its citizens looked forward to the arrival of the French.

Looming north-east of the city was Cerro de Guadalupe, a hill rising more than 100 metres above the surrounding plain. Two massive stone forts, Loreto and Guadalupe, guarded the

**"IN RACE, IN ORGANISATION, IN DISCIPLINE AND IN MORALS, WE ARE SO FAR SUPERIOR TO THE MEXICANS THAT, WITH 6,000 SOLDIERS AT MY DISPOSAL, I AM THE MASTER OF MEXICO"**



# "OUR ENEMIES ARE THE GREATEST SOLDIERS OF THE WORLD, BUT YOU ARE THE GREATEST SONS OF MEXICO, AND THEY WANT TO TAKE YOUR COUNTRY! SOLDIERS, I READ VICTORY ON YOUR FACES!"

hill. Roughly half a kilometre apart, the forts were linked and protected by earthworks.

Fort Guadalupe, crowning the higher south-eastern side of the hill, had once been a convent. Behind stone walls and a dry moat, the old convent's domes and twin spires still stood. To an approaching army, it still looked as if a large church rose above the walls.

After brushing off Mexican attacks along the way, Lorencez halted at Amozoc on the afternoon of 4 May. Now the French were only about 15 kilometres east of Puebla. The invaders were counting on the arrival of more troops under General Leonardo Márquez, a Mexican conservative allied with the French. However, they received bad news during a staff meeting – General Tomas O'Horan, with a force of Juarista cavalry, routed Márquez 50 kilometres from Puebla at Atlíxco. There would be no reinforcements.

Early on the morning of 5 May, the defenders of Puebla braced for the impending attack. It was an intimidating prospect. Since Waterloo nearly half a century ago, the French Army had beaten the Russians in the Crimea, the Austrians in northern Italy and had conquered much of North Africa and Indochina.

Zaragoza addressed his men. His brigades were mixtures of a core of regulars with

inexperienced National Guard and state units and militiamen. In a loud and clear voice, he told them, "Our enemies are the greatest soldiers of the world, but you are the greatest sons of Mexico, and they want to take your country! Soldiers, I read victory on your faces!"

Zaragoza deployed three quarters of his men to face an expected French attack from the Amozoc Road. The commands of Brigadier Generals Porfirio Díaz (1,020 men), Felipe Berriozábal (1,082 men) and Francisco Lamadrid (1,000 men) were deployed on the plain at the eastern edges of the city. Between the three brigades stood the old church of Los Remedios, which also served as Zaragoza's headquarters. About 550 lancers and other cavalry under Brigadier General Antonio Alvarez waited with them, while General Miguel Negrete commanded a 1,200-man division on Cerro de Guadalupe.

The French broke camp at Amozoc on 5 May at 5am and within four hours march, saw the church spires of Puebla. They halted about five kilometres east of the city, and while the soldiers boiled coffee, the officers made plans.

Lorencez had the advice of several Mexican conservatives who took part in fighting in Puebla during the 1850s. They recommended attacking



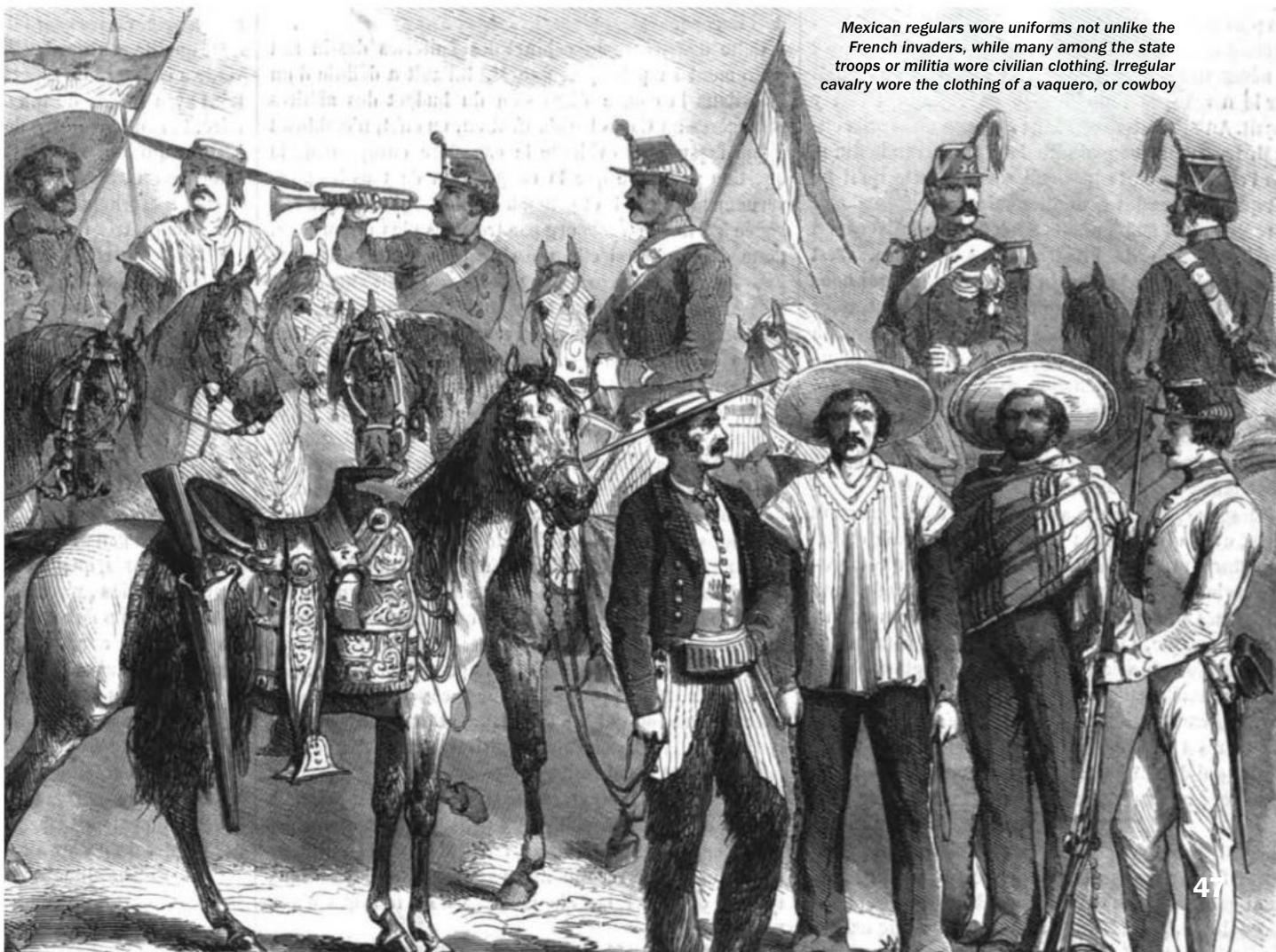
*Above: The battleground of Puebla in 1862 offered little cover for the attacking forces*

from the east, rather than taking on the hilltop forts. But Lorencez was reluctant to push directly into the city. The houses packed along the grid of wide, straight streets were built with thick, solid walls. Flat rooftops surrounded by masonry parapets offered cover for soldiers firing down into the streets. In short, each house was almost a miniature fortress.

On the other hand, a determined charge up the northern slopes of Cerro de Guadalupe might chase the defenders from the forts, and if the people were as sympathetic to the French as the reactionaries said, the town might rise up and join the French against the Juarista soldiers.

Confident in his men, and still contemptuous of his enemies, Lorencez sent two thirds of the army to his right at 11.30am. They halted north

*Mexican regulars wore uniforms not unlike the French invaders, while many among the state troops or militia wore civilian clothing. Irregular cavalry wore the clothing of a vaquero, or cowboy*



east of Cerro de Guadalupe at the Hacienda de Rementería. Far behind them, ten field guns opened fire on the Mexican fortifications on the heights. The rest of the French remained along the Amozoc Road to watch the enemy troops in front of the city and to guard the supply train.

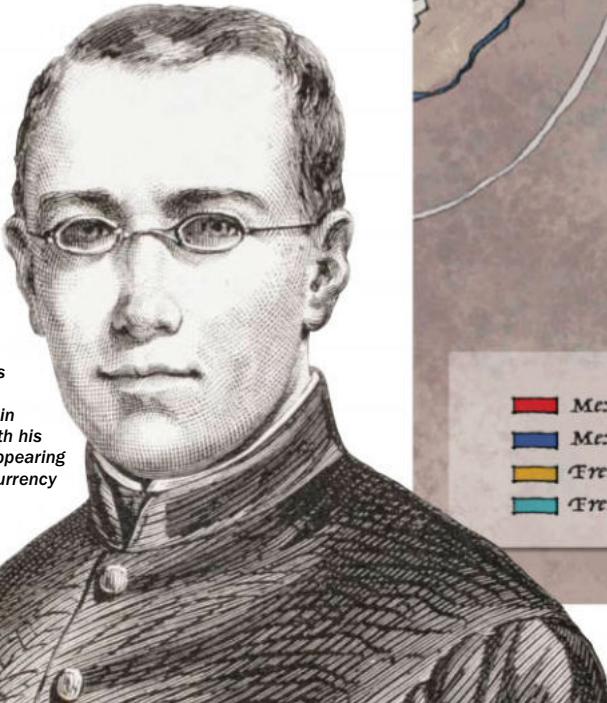
Firing upwards towards the heights at a range of 2,000 meters, the French field guns made no visible impression on the massive stone walls or the surrounding earthworks. The guns were moved forward to the Hacienda de Oropeza, closing the range to about 1,000 meters. The low-lying terrain partly hid the enemy positions from them but they still came under fire. A bullet buzzed so close to the cheek of artillery Lieutenant François-Chrétien-Léon Hartung that the ball singed his beard and knocked off his kepi. By 11.15am, the French had shot away half of their precious artillery ammunition with no visible results.

## The assault begins

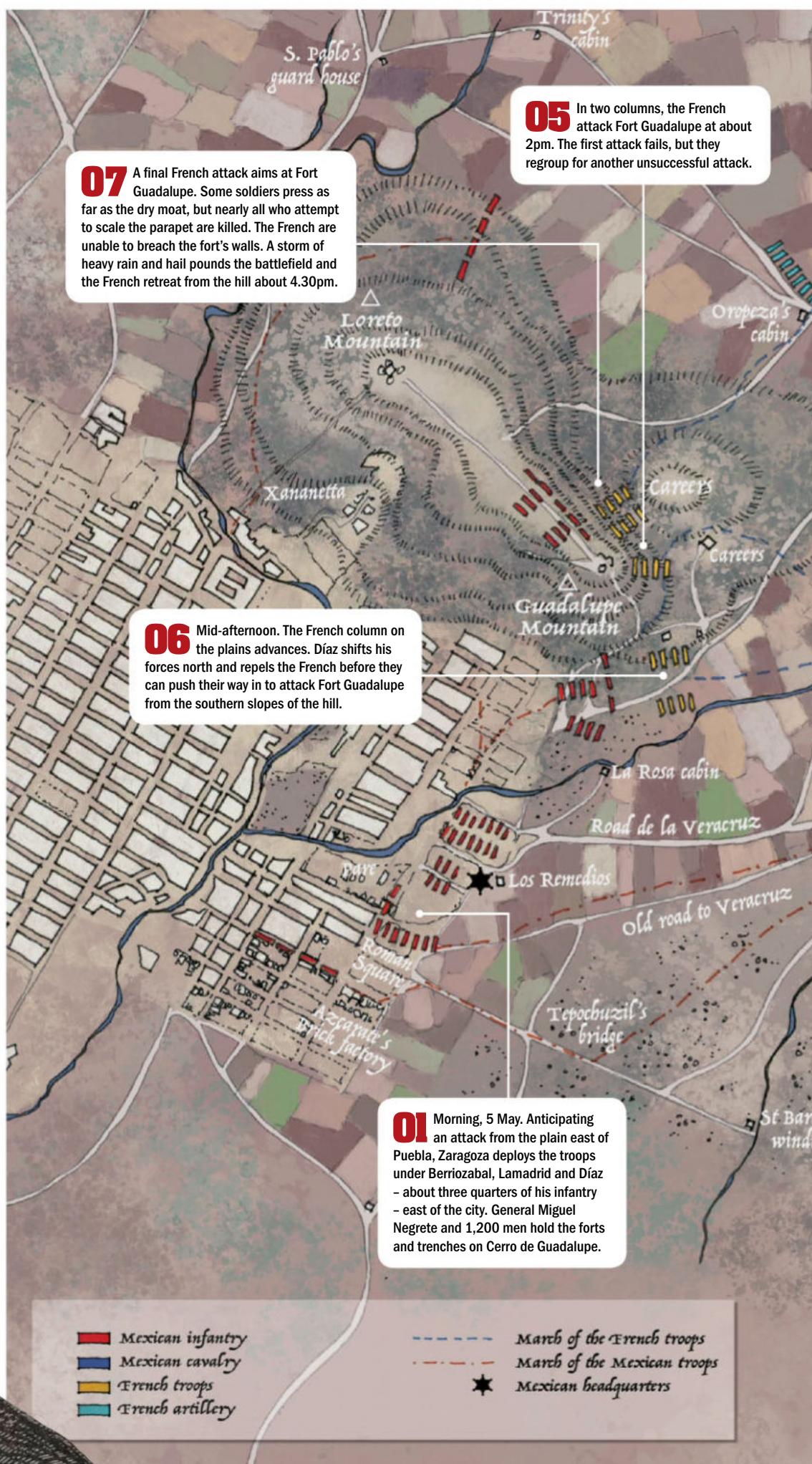
Lorenzec ordered an infantry assault on the hill. Two columns of Zouaves, with marine fusiliers and a battalion of the 99th Regiment, moved into position. "This attack," wrote Zaragoza, "not foreseen by me, although I know the daring of French troops obliged me to alter my plan." The commander sent Berriozábal's brigade, another battalion of infantry and part of his cavalry to bolster the forts.

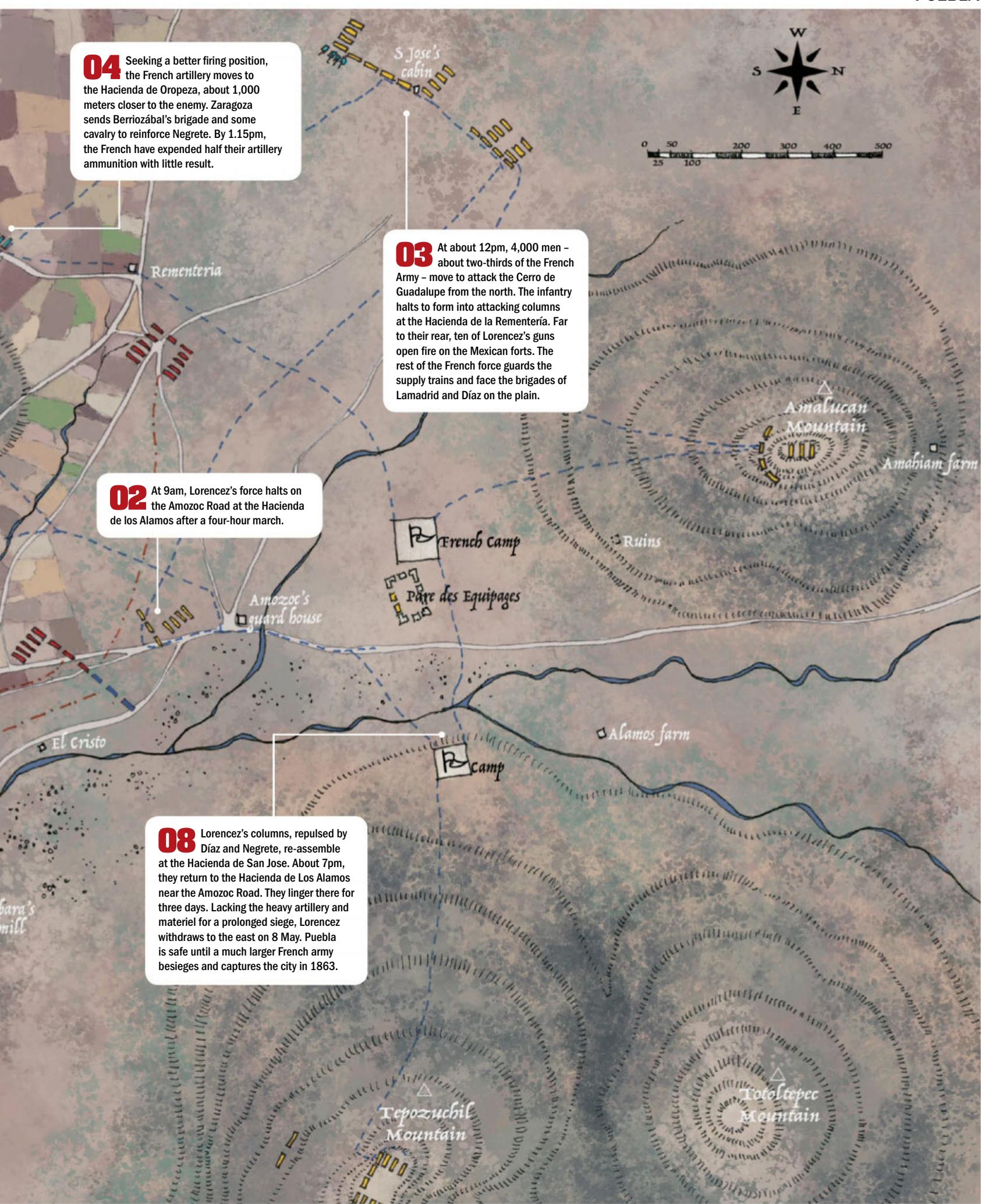
French soldiers counted ten 24-pounders bombarding them from Fort Guadalupe. Backing up the big guns were several mountain howitzers. Designed to be disassembled and carried on pack mules, these guns were small enough that they could be hauled up onto the platforms or even up into the towers of the old convent.

Under cover of the guns at Oropeza, and with a skirmish line of Zouaves leading the way, the French pressed up the hill. It was a long hike over dry, open ground with few trees and little vegetation for cover. Negrete sent the 6th Puebla Battalion forward as skirmishers with orders to fire and fall back to the main line. After swinging slightly to their right to avoid a quarry on the hillside, the French were on track to hit the enemy trenches to the left of Fort Guadalupe. Coming under heavy musket and artillery fire in their front and flanks, they were thrown back down the hill.



**Right:**  
General Zaragoza is still highly thought of in Mexico, with his likeness appearing on some currency





## GREAT BATTLES

A second French attack advanced up the hill, only to stall again in the face of heavy fire. Alvarez's cavalry, mistaken for Almonte's pro-French Mexican reactionaries, hacked at the enemy's right flank and the French tide ebbed downhill once again. Negrete reported that the field in front of his works was, "...covered with more than 300 killed, wounded and prisoners from among the conquerors of the Crimea and of Italy."

The French gathered for a third assault of Fort Guadalupe. Two columns came at the fort from the north, while a third hit the defence's eastern side. This time, the invaders crested the hill. They poured down the counterscarp into the dry moat at the foot of the fortress's walls, which a French soldier remembered as "six meters in height." Overhead, clouds drifted in, darkening the skies that had been bright, clear and blue that morning.

One detail of sappers carried a sack of gunpowder, which they hoped would blast open a gate. Other sappers carried rough ladders. In the rush to prepare for the attack, all that they could provide for climbing the walls were boards with cross-steps nailed onto them.

The crude ladders were of little use and the men found that climbing on each other's shoulders brought them closer to the enemy. Over the heads of a band of Zouaves, a Mexican cannon fired grapeshot through an embrasure in the walls. Boosted up by some of his men, Sub-lieutenant Marie-Joseph-Louis-Albert Caze suddenly faced the enemy gunners. As the cannon fired another round, Caze pointed his revolver through the opening and fired six shots at the gun crew.

Another Zouave climbed up the wall and wrapped his arms around the barrel of one of the heavy guns. A Mexican artillerist was carrying a cannonball to load his gun when saw the Zouave holding onto the barrel. Instantly, the gunner threw the cannonball and struck the Zouave's head. The dead soldier's hands slipped from the barrel and he plunged down to the moat.

Most of the men who reached the top of the walls were shot dead. One exception was a bugler of the Chasseurs à Pied named Roblet. Roblet also carried a battle standard as well as his bugle and after a succession of flag bearers was shot down, he started to climb. Atop the enemy walls, the musician held the flag while he

**Below:** While fighting continued near Fort Guadalupe, General Porfirio Díaz repelled a French attack from the plain east of Puebla

General Bazaine attacks the fort of San Xavier during the later Siege of Puebla, 29 March 1863



sounded the call for a charge. Roblet survived the battle and was awarded the Legion of Honor.

Across the moat on the counterscarp waved the flag of the 2nd Zouaves. First one flag bearer fell, then another and then, an old and honoured enlisted man named Cavalié took up the colours. Cavalié was a revered figure in the regiment and the younger officers let him call them, "my children." The old soldier waved the flag overhead and shouted, "Come and take it!" until he was hit in the chest. Hugging the flag close to him, he fell dead into the moat.

Down on the plain, French troops moved against Díaz, who had shifted to the north east from his original position to cover the city, as well as the southern approaches of Fort Guadalupe. Díaz repulsed this advance, preventing the French attackers from joining the assault on Negrete's men on the hill.

Late in the afternoon, rain began to drop from the darkening skies. In minutes, the rain swelled into a heavy downpour. Hailstones 'as big as walnuts' pelted the French and the rain turned the dusty soil into mud. Horses struggled to cover the ground. Soil at the edge of the fortifications crumbled away, dropping some

of the French soldiers into the moat. After 4pm, the enemy reeled away from the fort.

The French pulled back to Hacienda de Rementería, where they joined the column thrown back by Díaz. The wounded were withdrawn further back to a house with a courtyard. According to a French writer, five shells exploded in this courtyard, but hurt no one.

### The French retreat

It was late in the day and Zaragoza let the French withdraw rather than ordering a close pursuit. Negrete reported finding more than 30 Frenchmen, most of them dead, in the moat by Fort Guadalupe. Among the dead was a venerable officer, who according to Negrete wore the cross of the Legion of Honor presented by "Napoleon the Great" himself.

The Mexican casualties (227: 83 killed, 132 wounded, and 12 missing) were far fewer than the French's (476: 172 dead or missing, and 304 wounded). Only a few men were captured. French prisoners numbered only a couple of dozen and most of them were wounded men who had to be left behind. A lasso-wielding Mexican soldier named Mariano Oropeza had

**"THE OLD SOLDIER WAVED THE FLAG OVERHEAD AND SHOUTED, 'COME AND TAKE IT!' UNTIL HE WAS HIT IN THE CHEST. HUGGING THE FLAG CLOSE TO HIM, HE FELL DEAD INTO THE MOAT"**





## "BATTALIONS AND REGIMENTS FROM AROUND MEXICO HAD FOUGHT TOGETHER AND AN INVADING ARMY MADE OF SOME OF EUROPE'S FINEST TROOPS WAS HALTED DEAD IN ITS TRACKS"

captured one of the only unwounded prisoners, an enlisted man of the 99th regiment.

The French withdrew further to the Hacienda de San Jose, until they moved towards their morning's camp site on the Amozoc Road about 7pm. Zaragoza believed the French force was larger than his own and was content to wait at Puebla, rather than risk an attack on the enemy out in the open. As for the French, they lingered but made no further offensive moves. Lorencez turned his battered army east toward Orizaba on 8 June.

### From victory to legend

For Mexico, Puebla was an inspiring victory. Zaragoza wrote to the war ministry, "The national arms are covered with glory, and... during the long engagement, the Mexican army never once turned its back to the enemy." For years, political clashes and sectionalism had torn the country apart. Now, battalions and regiments from around Mexico had fought together and an invading army made of some of Europe's finest troops was halted dead in its tracks.

Making the defeat all the more bitter for the Third Empire of Napoleon III, the Battle of Puebla

fell on the anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's death on Saint Helena on 5 May 1821.

In the short run, Puebla gained Mexico only a short respite. Emperor Napoleon III sent almost 30,000 more troops across the Atlantic. When Major General Elie Forey was placed in command, Lorencez resigned rather than serve under another general. With his much larger army, Forey besieged Puebla. This time, the French were well prepared for a siege, and Puebla surrendered to them on 17 May 1863. Mexico City fell in June 1863. As a result, Napoleon III's favoured candidate, the Hapsburg Prince Maximilian, became the emperor of Mexico in 1864.

Juárez's government and army survived. The American Civil War ended in April 1865 and Washington was free to deal with the French intervention. By the fall of 1865, Lieutenant General Phil Sheridan and 50,000 American troops were moved to Texas near the Mexican border. Rather than risk war with the United States, Napoleon III withdrew from Mexico in 1866. Conservative loyalists still supported Maximilian, but the emperor was captured in 1867. Sentenced to death by court martial,

Emperor Maximilian was shot by a firing squad on 19 June 1867.

Ignacio Zaragoza died suddenly of typhoid fever scarcely four months after his great triumph on 8 September 1862. Benito Juárez died in office in 1872. Porfirio Díaz later became president of Mexico for most of the period between 1876 and 1911.

The anniversary of the Battle of Puebla, Cinco de Mayo, became a patriotic Mexican holiday before the expulsion of the French. The holiday subsequently grew in the United States as a symbol of Mexican heritage during the 1960s, and in recent years has become a celebration of Mexican culture.

A growing number of community Cinco de Mayo festivals are held in the United States, where many restaurants and bars advertise special Mexican-themed 5 May promotions. Possibly, Cinco de Mayo is celebrated more widely today in the United States than it is in Mexico. Considering that the Battle of Puebla's hero, General Ignacio Seguín Zaragoza, was born in Texas, the holiday's popularity 'north of the border' is certainly appropriate.

### FURTHER READING

- ★ THE MEXICAN ADVENTURE 1861-67 BY RENÉ CHARTRAND AND LEE JOHNSON
- ★ 5 DE MAYO: 1862 BY PEDRO ÁNGEL PALOU PÉREZ



# AMERICA'S REAL EXPENDABLES

Deep in the Burmese jungle during WWII, this guerrilla force fought not just the enemy, but disease and exhaustion. Only a few survived unscathed

WORDS GAVIN MORTIMER

In May 1942, Major General Joseph Stilwell emerged from the Burmese jungle exuding, in the words of one war correspondent, "...the wrath of God and cursing like a fallen angel." Two months earlier, the 59-year-old American general had been sent by President Franklin Roosevelt to Rangoon, as head of a small force of 440 military personnel. His mission was to train the Chinese army to fight the Japanese.

Stilwell was confident that the 3 million Chinese soldiers and their British allies had the capacity to counterattack the Japanese from their strongholds in central Burma. Neither the British nor the Chinese shared Stilwell's belief, and as the Japanese advanced, crushing all before them, the Americans were forced into a desperate retreat north towards India.

After a brutal 225-kilometre trek, Stilwell and his men reached India. He was suffering from jaundice and had lost 11 kilograms, but anger and shame had driven him on and out of the clutches of the enemy. "I claim we got a hell of a beating," Stilwell raged to reporters on 24 May. "We got run out of Burma and it's humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."

By the end of 1942, the Japanese had pushed right up into the north of Burma, seizing the important airstrip at Myitkyina, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill feared for the future of India, the jewel of the British Empire. The

Americans were more concerned with the fate of China, an ally it viewed as indispensable in the long run if Japan were to be beaten.

But how best to fight back in Burma? That was the question that gnawed at Churchill throughout the dark months of early 1943. Then in May, a 61-page report fell into his lap. It was written by Brigadier Orde Wingate who had just led 2,000 of his men out of the Burmese jungle after a primitive guerrilla campaign against the Japanese. The material damage inflicted on their enemy had been small, but Wingate and his 77th Brigade – better known as the Chindits – had jolted the Japanese out of their complacency by demonstrating that the British soldier could also fight well in the jungle.

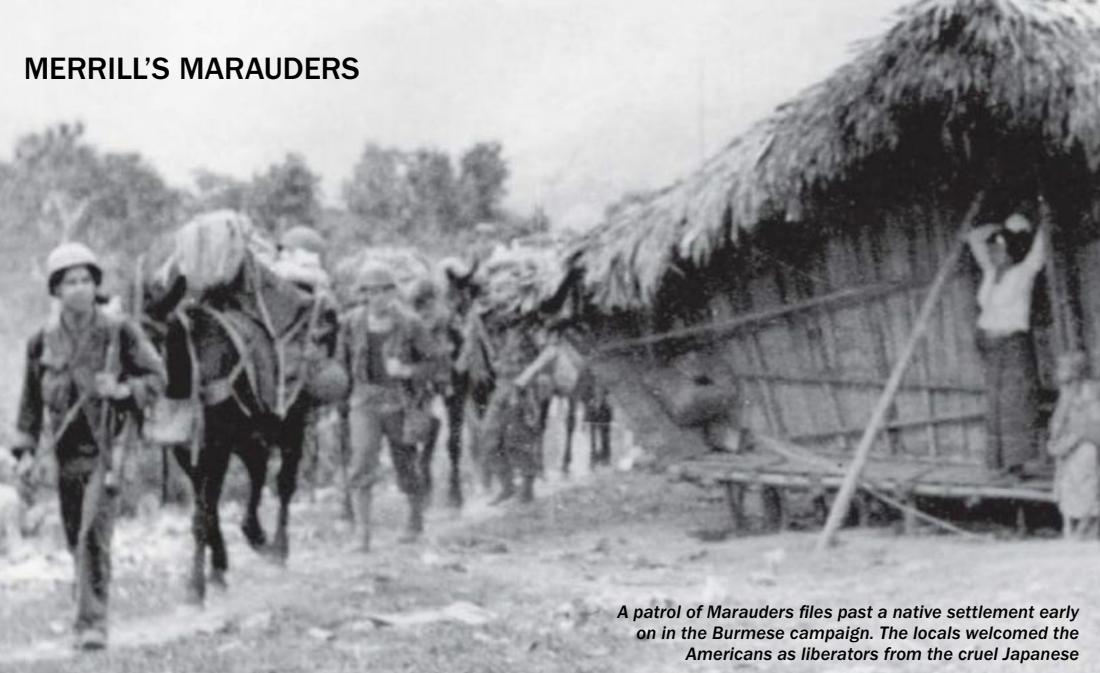
Churchill regarded Wingate as, "a man of genius and audacity," and he took him to the Quebec Conference in August 1943. Addressing President Roosevelt and the American chiefs of staff, Wingate explained that, "...long-range penetration affords greater opportunity of mystifying and misleading the enemy than any other form of warfare." Wingate described how a body of well-trained men could operate as guerrilla fighters deep inside the jungle provided they had air support; so impressed was Roosevelt that he authorised the deployment of American ground troops in Burma for the first time.

The man chosen to lead the force, provisionally designated the 1688th Casual



A Marauder patrol stands over a dead Japanese soldier after a skirmish on a jungle trail, flanked by high elephant grass





*A patrol of Marauders files past a native settlement early on in the Burmese campaign. The locals welcomed the Americans as liberators from the cruel Japanese*

*Right: Brigadier Frank Merrill (right) was a staff officer, not a combat officer and his weak heart gave out in Burma*



Detachment, was Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Hunter, who was instructed to select 3,000 men for a 'dangerous and hazardous' mission. The first man recruited was Lieutenant Gordon Mereness, a logistics officer whose job was to assemble a mountain of equipment within one month. The second soldier was 20-year-old Lieutenant Sam Wilson. He had first encountered Hunter at the infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he employed his precocious military skills as an instructor. "He was a tough, no-nonsense, hard-bitten man of few words, and yet at the same time he had a cutting dry humour," recalls Wilson, who himself was idealistic and highly intelligent.

Hunter was a decisive man with an ability to size up a person in a moment. This quality allowed him to select the men within the one-month time frame. "The [selection] process itself was very rapid and rather haphazard," says Wilson. "They were looking for action-oriented, strong men who were willing to face high-risk situations and it was a rapid process of selecting or denying membership."

The force sailed from San Francisco on 21 September, stopping en route to India at the Pacific Island of New Caledonia, where they took on board a further 700 soldiers, all veterans of the Pacific War. The six-

week voyage to Bombay allowed Wilson the opportunity to train his soldiers and get a glimpse of who each of them was. "These were men who were gamblers," he reflects. "They were willing to risk, and were trying to improve either physically or psychologically, the position in which they found themselves, and from which they volunteered."

The training was intensive. "There was daily physical exercise," remembers Wilson. "We also held little classes in weapons assembly, sighting-in rifles and other little drills, and also did whatever we could do by assisting with tactical training: setting up hypothetical situations and having the troops talk their way through various little tactical problems. We kept our minds alive to how to function effectively when in combat."

One of the first visitors to their training camp in Deolali was Orde Wingate. Even by the standards of the British officer class, Wingate was an eccentric, but he held the Americans

rapt as he explained that, "...the best defence in the jungle is to seek out the enemy and attack him, and thus impose your will on him."

Wingate considered Wingate "truly brilliant and totally creative," in evolving a concept that came to be known as insurgent warfare. That this was possible was down to the elasticity of Wingate's mind and the endurance of his Chindits. "We trained with the British and they were a really tough crew," says Wilson. "I learned from their attitude. They were cocky and they had frightening stories to tell and they would sometimes try to frighten us with their stories, but I didn't question the veracity of their tales. If anything, the reality was worse."

The Americans organised their force along the Chindits's line, dividing the 3,000 soldiers into three battalions and then sub-dividing the battalions into two combat teams (the Chindits called them columns), so that there were six combat teams in total, each composed of approximately 16 officers and 460 men.

**"THEY WERE WILLING TO RISK, AND WERE TRYING TO IMPROVE EITHER PHYSICALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THE POSITION IN WHICH THEY FOUND THEMSELVES, AND FROM WHICH THEY VOLUNTEERED"**

## GENERAL SAM

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED SOLDIERS IN US MILITARY HISTORY, SAM WILSON WAS A SPECIAL FORCES PIONEER AND CIA OPERATIVE

Sam Wilson's military career began with a lie in 1940, when he added two years to his age to enlist as an 18-year-old in the National Guard. But in the 37 years that followed, Wilson's path was straight and true until the day he retired as a lieutenant general in 1977. He first saw combat when fighting the Japanese in Burma as a member of Merrill's Marauders. After the end of World War II, Wilson entered the US Army's Foreign Area Specialist Training Program, becoming fluent in Russian. Assigned to Europe with the State Department, Wilson worked in military intelligence in the Soviet Union while acting as an interpreter in Berlin, Potsdam and Vienna.

On his return to the USA, he became a director of instruction at the US Army Special Warfare School, and

he was subsequently posted to Vietnam as a civilian working with USAID, based at the embassy in Saigon.

His other notable achievements include a spell as a special forces group commander, one of the creators of the US Army's Delta Force (for which he drew on the experience and expertise of the British Special Air Service), assistant division commander for operations in the 82nd Airborne Division, chief defence attaché at the US embassy in Moscow and finishing his service as the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and deputy director of the CIA. Now 93, General Sam, as he is affectionately known, lives in his native Virginia and is one of the most admired and respected figures in US military history.

*Right: Sam Wilson at a veterans' reunion in 2013*



# THE BURMA CAMPAIGN

THE JAPANESE BELIEVED BURMA BELONGED TO THEM AFTER ROUTING THE BRITISH IN 1941-42. BUT IN 1944, WINGATE'S CHINDITS AND MERRILL'S MARAUDERS HEADED INTO THE JUNGLE AND EMBARKED ON A BRUTAL CAMPAIGN OF GUERRILLA WAR



The three battalions were trained to operate as a self-contained unit, comprising a heavy weapons platoon, a rifle company, an intelligence and reconnaissance (I&R) platoon, a communications platoon and a pioneer and demolitions detachment. The equipment was carried by the men or on one of their 700 mules; beasts of burden capable of carrying 90 kilograms and content to eat only bamboo.

No job would be more hazardous than intelligence and reconnaissance, in effect scouting ahead of the main force to feel out the Japanese. Wilson was handed command of 1st Battalion's I&R platoon and Lieutenant Logan Weston the 3rd Battalion's. "Weston interviewed his candidates individually, prayed with them and found men of faith who were willing to risk their life," says Wilson. "I went to the guardhouse and had the sergeant of the guard call them out in one rank."

Wilson walked down the line of miscreants, shaking the hands of each one. "Then I stepped back and told them what I was about and what I needed. I told them that it will be very dangerous but we would have a front row seat, so to speak, on what was going on."

Wilson asked those interested to take three steps forward. A handful advanced. "Weston and I came at it from opposite ends of the spectrum," reflects Wilson. "But we found men who regarded the business of losing their lives lightly, who were tougher than the tough that we had in the unit as whole."

From Deolali, the 1688th Detachment moved to Deogarh in Bengal Province, where they spent hours on the firing range with Browning Automatic Rifles, semi-automatic M1 Garands, Thompson sub-machine guns and the carbine. The idea, said Hunter, was, "...that when the chips were down, they could employ them collectively to create a sledge-hammer effect to crush the heretofore 'Banzai' charge."

On 4 January 1944, Hunter was replaced as commanding officer by Brigadier General Frank D Merrill and the 1688th Detachment was reconstituted as the 5307th Composite Regiment (Provisional). The men didn't much care what they were called, but the demotion of the highly respected Hunter to second in command was hard to fathom. His replacement, the malleable Frank Merrill, was a friend of Stilwell's, yet he was physically frail with a weak heart and poor eyesight. "Hunter and Merrill were classmates at West Point in 1929," explains Wilson. "Merrill was a brilliant staff officer with creative ideas and Hunter was the executive executor of ideas, the man of action."

On 7 February, the Americans – reduced through illness and accidents to 2,600 men – marched into Burma. They were unrecognisable from the ragtag collection of volunteers who had stepped ashore at Bombay three months earlier. A war correspondent watching them train in India had dubbed them "Merrill's Marauders" and the moniker stuck. The men liked it, as they did their uniform of dark green cotton and rubber-soled canvas boots. The packs they carried on their backs weighed between 18 and 22 kilograms and included their K-rations, which provided the soldier with a daily intake of barely 3,000 calories. The communications platoons carried the combination SCR-284 transmitter and receiver radio and also the SCR-300, a portable radio transceiver worn on a mounted backpack and better known as a 'Walkie-Talkie'.

When Wilson first marched into Burma, it was with what he described as, "...a strong sense of adventure and excitement, and there was also a feeling of some confidence, because I was beginning to do on the ground the things

**"AS I GOT ABOUT HALFWAY ACROSS THE GLADE, THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS HIDING ALONG THE RIVER BANK OPENED UP ON ME. THEY SHOT THE CANTEEN OFF MY BELT, RIDDLED MY PACK AND MY HELMET WAS KNOCKED OFF AS I HIT GROUND"**



*Marauders exchange greetings with the Chinese 1st Provisional Tank Group after their arrival at Walawbum*



I had been teaching for more than a year at infantry school."

There was no "feeling of foreboding" as he and the rest of the Marauders assembled at Ningbyen on 22 February. Despite the fact that the Chindits told Wilson that the Japanese fighting soldier, "was tough, capable and skilful," the Americans considered themselves tougher and better-equipped.

The Marauders' first mission was to drive 7,000 Japanese soldiers of the elite 18th Division out of the Hukawng Valley, something two Chinese divisions had been unable to do for several weeks. The plan was for the Chinese to launch a fresh attack on the main Japanese position at the village of Walawbum, while the Marauders swung round the east of the Japanese flank, cutting their way through the jungle and establishing blocks on the Kamaing Road, south of Walawbum, thereby preventing the enemy from withdrawing south.

The instruction issued to Sam Wilson and his 48 men of the 1st Battalion's I&R platoon was to head south and reconnoitre a series of villages to the east. The trails down which they probed were surrounded by foliage so dense they had to walk in single file, five metres between each man, while overhead the undergrowth on either side of the trail joined to create a tunnel effect, blocking out the Sun's rays and reducing further the scouts' visibility. "We were moving along a trail when we came to a kind of open glade," recalls Wilson. One of his

men spotted a horse across the glade, so Wilson decided to investigate. "As I got about halfway across the glade, the Japanese soldiers hiding along the river bank opened up on me. They shot the canteen off my belt, riddled my pack and my helmet was knocked off as I hit the ground."

Wilson's composure was only momentarily ruffled. Looking up he saw a Japanese officer mounting his horse. "I opened my full-bore carbine on him, all 15 rounds," he recalls. "I hit him with the first round but kept pumping rounds into him as he was sliding off the horse." Then out of the corner of his eye, Wilson spotted something coming towards him. It was an enemy grenade. "It landed about half a metre from my right shoulder. I flicked it away, then it went off and I temporarily blanked out from the concussion. As I came to, I became aware of a Japanese soldier running at me with his bayonet. I turned to fire at him and suddenly realised that I had emptied my magazine of bullets at the horseman."

The screaming Japanese was now only moments away, the tip of his bayonet aimed at the helpless American's chest. Wilson heard three quick cracks. "He practically fell on top of me," he says. From a distance of 35 metres, Sergeant Clarence Branscomb had put three rounds into the chest of the soldier. "Everything just happened in very, very rapid motion," reflects Wilson. "But I

## THE SIEGE OF NHBUM GA

DUG IN ON A HILLTOP DEEP IN THE BURMESE JUNGLE, THE MARAUDERS FOUGHT OFF REPEATED BANZAI ATTACKS DURING 12 BLOODY DAYS THAT LEFT 400 JAPANESE AND 52 MARAUDERS DEAD

Nhpum Ga didn't add up to much. Consisting of four or five bashas [bamboo houses] in a clearing 365 metres long and 225 metres wide surrounded by dense jungle. Nearly 920 metres above sea level, the village was a junction on the main trail running north to south, and was situated on a precipitous ridge above slopes covered in thick bamboo and large hardwood trees.

That made Nhpum Ga the ideal spot to block the Japanese counter-attack north until the Chinese 38th Division arrived. Lieutenant Colonel George McGee had 900 men under his command, and although the Japanese soon cut them off from ground resupply, the 2nd Battalion was regularly resupplied by air. However, despite fresh supplies of ammunition, food and water, the Marauders were subjected to continual enemy fire, either from one of two Japanese artillery guns or the snipers positioned in the dense undergrowth. Before long, the rotting corpses of men and mules created a nauseous aroma that hung like a blanket over the village. Men began to go down with dysentery but there was no other choice than to stay where they were in their fox-holes.

The first major assault on Nhpum Ga was launched on 30 March and for the next 11 days, the Japanese kept up their attacks. After one Banzai charge, the Americans counted 54 dead Japanese but the strain was taking its toll. McGee noted that most of his men wore "a hopeless look of despair."

From his command post at Hsamshingyang, 6.5 kilometres to the north, Colonel Hunter tried desperately to lift the siege but the density of the jungle made it hard to advance up the hillside without incurring heavy casualties. What none of the Americans knew was the state of the Japanese forces after nearly two weeks of heavy fighting. With no resupply from the air, they were reduced to cannibalism. On 9 April – Easter Sunday – the siege was finally lifted as the bedraggled Japanese melted away at the approach of the Chinese 38th Division. They left behind 400 of their dead. The Marauders in Nhpum Ga had lost 52 dead and 163 were wounded.

*Below: Members of the 3rd Battalion man a Browning heavy machine gun during the fighting to save their buddies trapped at Nhpum Ga*



*The Marauders' mules were invaluable in transporting the soldiers' equipment through the jungle*





Men of the 1st Battalion, taken at Naubam, in April 1944. Sam Wilson is second row, crouching behind the soldier wearing the cloth cap



**"WITH SNAKES, TIGERS, MOSQUITOES AND BLOOD-SUCKING LEECHES, NOT TO MENTION A FANATICAL JAPANESE FOE, THE MARAUDERS' CASUALTY RATE WAS INDEED AS PREDICTED"**

## MERRILL'S MARAUDERS

realised how stupid I had been, so I posted security and then pulled the men in close together and had them facing me. I then critiqued what had happened to show them the mistakes I had made and the mistakes they had made."

Wilson's platoon pushed on and they soon entered the village of Tanja Ga, a typical Burmese dwelling of bamboo huts in a clearing surrounded by jungle. There were fresh prints on the trail, the distinctive hobnailed imprints of Japanese boots, but after a scout of the surrounding area, Wilson was confident they had got beyond the right flank of the Japanese. The information had to be relayed to Merrill as a matter of urgency, but 35 kilometres separated them from HQ, putting them outside the range of their portable SCR-300s radios.

There was no alternative but for Wilson and Branscomb to saddle up the platoon's two horses and deliver the message in person. Other than a nocturnal encounter with fighting two big cats – leopards or tigers, in Wilson's estimation – the pair gave the message to Merrill on 27 February. He was elated, as was Stilwell, who ordered the Marauders to close on Walawbum "as quickly as possible," while the main Chinese force advanced south. Before the Marauders executed their orders, they radioed in a resupply, "...using a large sand bar around which the river curved to the west, as a drop zone."

In Wilson's view, air supply was, "...one of the three or four major contributory factors to the ultimate success of our campaign." It wasn't just the delivery of rations and ammunition,

but also the small and agile L-4 liaison planes, which in the hands of a skilled pilot could land on a sand bar and evacuate a badly wounded soldier. "That was vital and contributed immeasurably to our morale," reflects Wilson. "And also the ability to deliver the munitions of war, including food, to us in tight circumstances was simply phenomenal. Our lifeline literally hung in mid-air."

Once resupplied, the Marauders pushed on through 65 kilometres of dense jungle towards Walawbum. The battle was joined on the banks of the Numpyek River, when the 56th Infantry regiment launched a wave of frontal assaults on the well-entrenched 3rd Battalion on the far side. "It was shooting fish in a barrel," recalled one Marauder. When the Japanese finally withdrew, the river was red with the blood of 800 of their dead. American casualties amounted to eight dead and 37 wounded. Nonetheless, the delight of the Americans was tempered by the knowledge that the bulk of the Japanese 18th Division had been allowed to escape because of the hesitant Chinese advance.

The pursuit, therefore, continued from the Hukawng Valley into the Mogaung Valley, 30 kilometres south, where the Japanese had established their new frontline among a series of low hills at the head of the northern end of the valley with the village of Jambu Bum at their command post.

Wilson's 1st Battalion, which had been frustrated bystanders during the battle for Walawbum, was assigned the lead role. They had instructions to head south along a jungle



*Above: Hsamshingyang, seen here from a supply aircraft, was Colonel Hunter's HQ as he directed the operation to raise the siege at Nhpum Ga*

trail and establish a block near the village of Shaduzup, 16 kilometres south of the enemy position at Jambu Bum, so that when the Chinese 22nd Division attacked there would be no retreat for the Japanese.

The Marauders soon encountered Japanese skirmishing parties along the trail, and as casualties began to mount, Wilson was ordered to strike off the trail and blaze a path through uncharted bamboo jungle in order to get behind the Japanese undetected. "That was incredibly difficult," reflects Wilson, whose men would sometimes cover 1.5 kilometres in three hours. "We had to chop off bamboo at ground level and about 1.5 metres up from the

## "I WOKE ONE DAY WITH MY MIND SUDDENLY CLEAR AND REALISED I WAS ALONE ON THE WARD. THE OTHERS HAD DIED ONE BY ONE"

*Marauders kneel in prayer for their deliverance after the savage siege at Nhpum Ga had been lifted on Easter Sunday 1944*



# VOLUNTEERS & VETERANS

IN AUGUST 1943, A CALL WENT OUT FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR A 'DANGEROUS AND HAZARDOUS MISSION'. THOUSANDS APPLIED AND THOSE CHOSEN SOON LEARNED THEY WERE CONSIDERED EXPENDABLE

The officer initially selected to command the 3,000-strong force was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hunter, who had experience of jungle training in the Philippines and Panama. Given a month to raise his force for the mission, codenamed 'Galahad', Hunter contacted infantry depots and training schools throughout the States in his quest for volunteers who were told they, "...would suffer approximately 85 per cent casualties." Those who answered the call were unblooded in battle but eager for action, such as Bob Passanisi, the only soldier in his signal company of 245 men to volunteer.

Once assembled in San Francisco, the men underwent a basic medical and were then interviewed by Hunter and either accepted or rejected. Due to time constraints, there was no physical fitness testing but Hunter, a shrewd and experienced officer, was an astute judge of character and few men were returned to unit (RTUd).

Having selected two thirds of his men, Hunter took on board a further 950 at New Caledonia en route to India. These men were veterans of the Pacific War and had fought on islands such as Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella, and although battle-hardened, they had been weakened by malaria and poor diet.

These veterans were therefore often the first to succumb to the brutal interior of the Burmese jungle, where extremes of heat and cold combine with the thick, rotting vegetation to provide a deadly incubator for diseases such as malaria, scrub typhus and amoebic dysentery. With snakes, tigers, mosquitoes and blood-sucking leeches, not to mention a fanatical Japanese foe, the Marauders' casualty rate was indeed as predicted.

ground, so that in effect we were tunnelling through this thick bamboo. And we weren't on flat ground, we were actually moving up a hill. It was one of the most exhausting experiences I've ever been through."

But their endeavour was rewarded when, on March 27, they emerged from the bamboo forest and saw before them the muddy waters of the 15-metre-wide Mogaung river. Wilson could hear the dull thud of axes from the other side of the river so, taking sergeant Perlee Tintary with him, he struck out for the far bank to investigate. "About halfway across the river, I heard hissing noises behind me," says Wilson. "I looked round and the boys were giving me the double-time signal and pointing to the far bank. So we went tearing across the remaining stretch of water, clambered up the bank and crawled into the weeds just as a Japanese patrol came by. As they passed, I was wondering would they notice the stream of water we'd left behind but they just kept going."

Wilson and Tintary moved forward on a reconnaissance, gauging the strength of the Japanese bivouac and reporting back to HQ. Early the next morning, the 1st Battalion attacked, killing an estimated 300 Japanese.

Elsewhere, however, Merrill's decision to separate the three battalions had left the 2nd Battalion dangerously isolated. Surrounded by a large Japanese force near the village of Inkangahtawng, they repelled 16 Banzai attacks before radioing in a flight of P-51 fighters to check the enemy advance and allow them the opportunity to pull back across the river. But the Japanese gave chase, pursuing the 2nd Battalion along a narrow ridgeline on top of which was the village of Nhpum Ga.

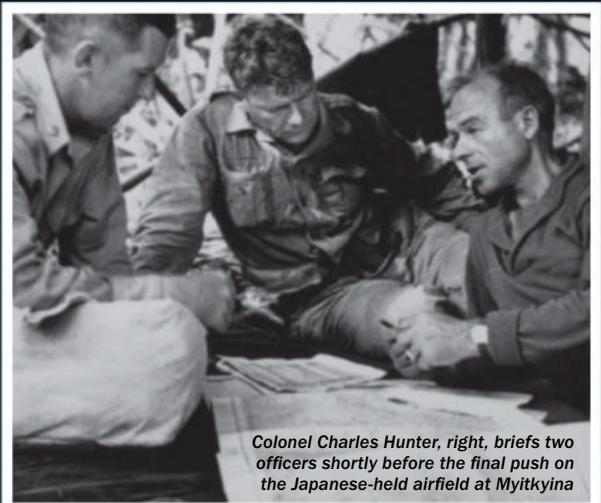
The battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel George McGee, considered it a suitable place to make a stand. Meanwhile, the stress of the past few days was too much to bear for Merrill. He suffered a mild heart attack on 28 March and was evacuated, replaced as

commander by Hunter, who set up his HQ at Hsamshingyang, six kilometres to the north of Nhpum Ga, where 2nd Battalion was besieged.

The siege was finally lifted on 9 April – Easter Sunday – two days after the 1st Battalion had arrived after an epic 50-kilometre march across tortuous terrain over five days. A quarter of the 800 men had been ravaged by amoebic dysentery. In the days that followed, Hunter ordered the Marauders to assemble on the airstrip cut into a rice paddy. "He had us form up by squads and platoons and companies, and we were marched up and down the rice paddy undergoing close quarter drills," explains Wilson. "It was a genius-like move on Hunter's part, although it upset people badly because they just wanted to crawl off somewhere and lie in the sun, but we were an elite military unit and Hunter was trying to snap us back into shape as a coherent force."

That should have been it for the Marauders. They had been promised leave in India once the Japanese forces had been driven out of Mogaung Valley but now Stilwell reneged on that promise, ordering them to seize the strategically important airfield at Myitkyina. That entailed a 32-kilometre backtrack north and then a 110-kilometre march over the 1,860-metre Naura Hkyat Pass in the Kumon mountains. Yet the trail hadn't been used for a decade, during which time it had become infested with pythons and huge blood-sucking leeches. It was a route that would have tested even the fittest soldier, let alone ones that had been weakened by disease and exhaustion. Wilson says there was a "dull anger" when informed of their new mission. "By that time we were down to one third of our force. Our uniform was in tatters, we were breaking out of combat boots and we were having difficulty holding ourselves together."

But they did, by dint of courage, endurance, determination and above all, an iron camaraderie that held them tight amid the



Colonel Charles Hunter, right, briefs two officers shortly before the final push on the Japanese-held airfield at Myitkyina

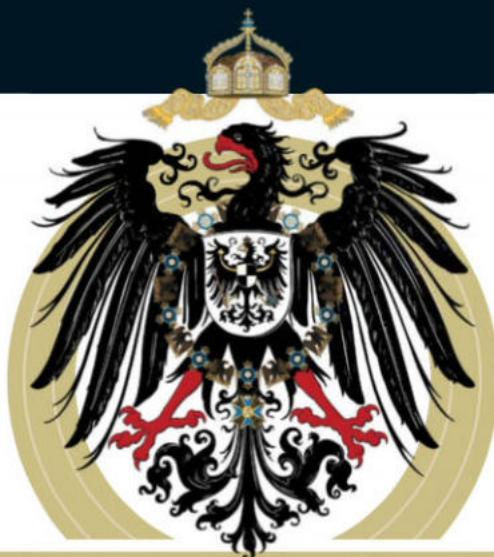
**"THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE CALL  
WERE UNBLOODED IN BATTLE BUT  
EAGER FOR ACTION"**

heavy rain that made every step up the muddy, treacherous mountain trail an ordeal. "It was bone-racking hard to get to our feet the next morning, eat something cold and start out again," says Wilson. "We were blindly staggering forward, like a drunk staggering out of a bar, and there was some anger, some bitterness, some resentment. The favourite saying when someone would complain was 'well, you volunteered for this'."

By the time they came down the other side of the mountains, Wilson was so tormented by dysentery that he had cut the seat out of his combat trousers to make life easier. So had many more Marauders, but still they advanced, taking Myitkyina airstrip on 17 May. Wilson was evacuated a few days later suffering from dysentery, malaria and the often-fatal mite typhus. "There were six of us in the typhus ward in India," he says. "I woke one day with my mind suddenly clear and realised I was alone on the ward. The others had died one by one."

Although Myitkyina airstrip was swiftly captured, indecision by Stilwell gave the Japanese the chance to pour reinforcements into the town, three kilometres to the east, and it wasn't until 3 August that it was finally captured. Of the 2,600 Marauders who had marched into Burma just six months earlier, 93 of them had been killed in combat, 30 had died from disease, 301 were wounded or missing and 1,970 had been hospitalised with disease. Only 206 of the original unit had come through Burma unscathed.

Wilson, who was awarded two silver and one bronze star for his gallantry and leadership in Burma, is one of 27 remaining Marauders. Asked how he kept going when he was sick and worn out, he replies: "I found I had one ability, I could put one foot in front of the other, I could take the next step. And what's a step? You put one foot forward and then the next, and then the next, and that is all that required. You just have to take the next step."



## Heroes of the Reich

# EUGEN BINDER

Facing the enemy in brutal frontline engagements, this sergeant was decorated with the highest honours for his bravery in World War I

WORDS ROB SCHÄFER

Sergeant Eugen Binder joined the ranks of Infanterie-Regiment Nr 126 'Grossherzog Friedrich von Baden' (8 Württembergisches) upon mobilisation on 4 August 1914. Distinguishing himself in combat throughout the war, he was wounded five times and decorated with three prestigious gallantry awards. He was a true Frontschwein (frontline pig) who left three harrowing accounts of his wartime actions. The Golden Military Merit Medal of the Kingdom of Württemberg was awarded 4,234 times throughout the war.

"I earned both classes of the Iron Cross during the fighting in the positions at Hooge in July 1915. On the evening of 19 July, the enemy had detonated a large mine under our trenches. The explosion had created a huge crater of hitherto unseen dimensions. More than 100 men of 7th and 8th company had been buried alive and a wealth of equipment, arms and material had been destroyed. Immediately afterwards, English assault troops had successfully taken possession of the crater and the trenches adjacent to it. During that time, I was serving as temporary machine gunner in 10th company, which formed part of the regimental reserve. At 10.30pm, our company gathered to participate in the counterattack to retake the mine crater.

The company advanced and immediately came under fire from the enemy artillery. A number of men were killed and the advance

stalled. There was no way to push forward the attack without suffering severe casualties, so the order to withdraw was given and the company retreated into the safety of the trenches. At 4am, another attempt was made. This time the company attacked from a different direction. A hand grenade squad of 8th company managed to push the English back while our company delivered a rapid suppressing fire trying to stop the English from bringing reinforcements forward.

Using my rifle, I managed to shoot five Englishmen who were foolhardy enough to stick their heads over the crater's lip. Even though we finally managed to push the English out of the crater, we were unable to regain possession of it, so plans were made to retake it at a later time. For my actions on that night, I was put forward to be decorated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

On 30 July, a new offensive operation was conducted to finally retake the crater and parts of the surrounding area south of Hooge and north of the chausse from the English. First Battalion and 6th company were chosen to conduct the assault. By then I had re-transferred to my post in 6th company. The attack had been meticulously planned and prepared. To support our assault we had been supplied with 20 flamethrowers. Advanced saps

had been dug forward to reduce the amount of open ground that had to be covered.

Under the protective fire of our mine throwers, artillery and flamethrowers, we launched our attack at about 4.30am with 2nd, 3rd and 6th company leading the assault. Shortly before we reached our objective, a German mine detonated amid our ranks, killing and wounding 12 men. While the other two companies made good progress, we were met by withering fire from two English machine guns that caused a number of casualties. Then suddenly we were within the English trench and a sharp fight in close quarters developed. Every man fought for himself. An English officer killed the man next to me with a shot from his revolver and was in turn bayoneted by the Gefreiter Wiesacher. A hand grenade landed just in front of me, instinctively I picked it up and threw it back into a group of English soldiers who were trying to find cover in the narrow entrance of a dug out. The explosion killed at least three of the enemy soldiers and wounded many more.

The English fought on stubbornly and no mercy was given on either sides. The fight developed into a brawl in which pistols, fists and even teeth were used to annihilate the opposition. Soon, the first of the English began

**"USING MY RIFLE, I MANAGED TO SHOOT FIVE ENGLISHMEN WHO WERE FOOLHARDY ENOUGH TO STICK THEIR HEADS OVER THE CRATER'S LIP"**

Sergeant Eugen Binder earned  
the 1st and 2nd Class of  
the Iron Cross as well as the  
Golden Military Merit Medal of  
the Kingdom of Württemberg

*Far left: The Iron Cross 1st  
and 2nd Class*





## "BY THE MORNING, THE HARASSING FIRE HAD REACHED THE STRENGTH OF A FRIGHTENING TORNADO, EACH IMPACTING SHELL SENDING UP A WITHERING HAIL OF STONE SPLINTERS"

to drop their weapons and raised their hands in surrender. 20 prisoners were taken; strong and proud men belonging to VIII battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps. We immediately began to consolidate our new position while the remaining companies went forward to pursue the beaten enemy. For my actions on that day, I was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class.

It was on the fourth day of the great spring battle in France in 1918 that my regiment, the 126th, lay in front of the strongly fortified English position near Bapaume. On this day, the first line of the Bapaume defensive system was to be taken. All through the night, the

enemy kept up a strong harassing fire with his artillery, targeting our rear areas along the road of Beugny to the brickworks at Mordries and the positions of the second and third battalions of the 126th Infantry Regiment, which ran along the railway embankment of Lebucquière.

Our group tried to find cover behind and under four abandoned enemy railway wagons. By the morning, the harassing fire had reached the strength of a frightening tornado, each impacting shell sending up a withering hail of stone splinters from the railway line. The railway wagons offered only little protection and we soon began taking severe

casualties. Many a comrade had to give his life there.

Back then I was an Unteroffizier in command of the first group of 1st platoon, 9th company of the 126th Infantry Regiment. Rushing forward in bounds, one by one we began crossing the railway line. This was only possible due to the fire support given to us by the group of Unteroffizier Walker, who lay on our left. This neighbouring group effectively targeted our English opponents who, being situated on the high ground with four machine guns, kept directing a murderous fire on our groups.

Nevertheless, we successfully crossed the railway line and a narrow stream after which my men and I took position about 20 meters in front of the English lines. Having lost connection to the comrades on our left and right, our situation was most critical. An Englishman shouted over to us, demanding our surrender. I asked my comrades if they would



*Above: The MG 08 was heavily based on the American Maxim gun, and various iterations of the gun emerged during the First World War*



*German soldiers are seen here assaulting an enemy position with flamethrowers and grenades*



*Flamethrowers were among the most destructive weapons to be developed during the war*



## **"I TOLD MY GUNNER NUMBER TWO, KARL TRUCHSÄSS, TO LIGHT US SOME CIGARETTES FOR A FINAL SMOKE BEFORE DEATH, AS THERE WAS NO WAY THEY WOULD BE GETTING US ALIVE"**

be willing to do so, but not a single one even thought about leaving me. A shout of "Go to hell Tommy!" answered the English request once and for all. A daredevil dispatch carrier had, in the meantime, brought new orders – we were to fall back a few hundred meters as our own artillery would soon open up on the English positions. This we managed to do without suffering any casualties. After a barrage that lasted about 20 minutes, the assault on the enemy line commenced. With the men at my side, we charged across open ground towards the first English trench. A machine gun opened up and bullets whizzed past our heads with a deep humming sound. A light machine gun, brought forward on our right, provided some covering fire.

Once inside the enemy trench, I dropped two English soldiers with a few shots from my pistol. A few others were killed or wounded by my men. Everywhere around us, English soldiers dropped their weapons and begged for mercy, but we didn't have time to take care of them as my small group and I charged further up the slope on our own. Here we found cover in a partially collapsed trench. We had

just reached it when I noticed that an enemy counterattack was in full swing.

Our own company had been completely dispersed by enemy shellfire and we all realised that we would have to take care of the business on our own. The enemy, at least two battalions strong, surged towards us, wave after wave in their conspicuous khaki coloured helmets. It was a frightening spectacle. Our job was clear; we had to contain this strong and dangerous enemy force for as long as possible. We could not know how long we would be able to survive against the numerically far superior foe.

Wave after wave surged forward and was shredded to pieces by the fire of our light machine gun. Only seconds later, we had been spotted and a number of enemy machine guns brought down a hail of fire upon me and my little group, of which five men were killed outright. Now enemy batteries opened up in an attempt to annihilate our machine gun nest. To make our position less conspicuous, and to get rid of the steam clouds emitting from our glowing hot gun, I dismantled the lock to release the water from the cooling mantle. I then took over the gun myself and continued

firing. When the barrel was glowing red from the heat, I removed it and replaced it with a spare one. As a precaution I had equipped my group with a set of three spare barrels; a decision that now paid off. Keeping up a rapid fire, we continued to replace the seething hot barrels in regular intervals.

By now I had shot about 5,000 rounds at the enemy and I was lying in a pile of cartridge cases. Hundreds of khaki clad bodies lay dead and wounded in front of our gun, yet the situation was hopeless. There was no way to annihilate the foe completely. I told my gunner number two, Karl Truchsäss, to light us some cigarettes for a final smoke before death, as there was no way they would be getting us alive.

Now it was only the two of us who were still alive. We only had 50 rounds of ammunition left. Checking my pistol, I noticed that it taken a hit from a shell splinter, which had made it unusable. After having fired my last 50 rounds towards the enemy, I laid on my back and finished my cigarette. I then noticed that the firing from the enemy side had ceased and that the English had withdrawn to their positions. After we had returned to Cambrai, our regimental commander, Major Götz, personally enquired which men had made up the group that had stood alone in the face of the English onslaught.

This was how I earned the Golden Military Merit Medal.

”

# NORFOLK

## HENRY VIII'S ENFORCER

WORDS TOM GARNER

Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, was an infamous figure at the Tudor court but he was also a prolific soldier who pillaged France, crushed rebellions and helped bring about the demise of a Scottish king

In September 1513, a huge army under the command of King James IV of Scotland was wreaking havoc in northern England. James had invaded with more than 30,000 men to uphold the auld alliance with France against their common English foe. The young king of England was campaigning overseas and the defence of the north was left to the aged Earl of Surrey and his son Lord Thomas Howard.

There was much to play for. Father and son were actually tainted nobility whose family's eminent status had been diminished in recent decades, while James IV had easily taken four castles in Northumberland against little resistance. Honour was at stake in the inevitable battle and its outcome would change the course of Scottish history, setting the son of Surrey on the path to greatness.

Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk is one of the most prominent figures of Tudor history. For more than half a century, he was an indispensable part of the English court and is most famous for his fluctuating career as Henry VIII's premier nobleman. Norfolk was the uncle of two of Henry's six wives, Anne Boleyn and

Catherine Howard, and he largely engineered these doomed unions in order to satisfy his personal, as well as his dynastic ambitions. Both women were executed on the orders of the king for infidelity and Norfolk's open abandonment of his nieces to preserve his own position revealed him to be both lacking in compassion and utterly self-interested. He even presided over the trial of Anne Boleyn, which sealed his notoriety, but Norfolk was more than a ruthless politician.

Between 1497-1554, the duke loyally served the Tudors as a soldier and, especially under Henry VIII, served as the military enforcer of the dynasty's iron rule. His martial achievements varied widely from humiliating defeats to glorious victories and reveal the confused, bloody reality of early 16th century warfare. Far from being a 'Renaissance man', Norfolk was arguably the last of England's Medieval warriors.

### Serving a new dynasty

Born in 1473, it would be many years before Norfolk received his ducal title and it would not be earned via the usual route of mere inheritance, but through the hard graft of campaigning. His family had been prominent

supporters of the House of York under Edward IV and Richard III but when the latter was killed at the Battle of Bosworth (along with Norfolk's grandfather) in 1485, the Howards fell from favour under the new Tudor regime of Henry VII. From that time onwards, the Howards threw themselves into proving their loyalty and restoring the family's prestige, and the young Thomas Howard played his part by performing conspicuous military service.

Howard began serving the Tudors in 1497 aged 24, at opposite ends of the country. He first took part in suppressing a rebellion in Cornwall and then marched north to fight against the Scots. During the latter campaign, he served under his father, the Earl of Surrey, who knighted him on 30 September 1497. His continued service over the next decade did not go unnoticed and in April 1510, he was made a Knight of the Garter by the new Tudor monarch: Henry VIII. Howard was politically close to the teenage Henry and was even his uncle by marriage, having wed one of the king's maternal aunts in 1495. After receiving the Garter, Howard was regularly called upon as a soldier in important capacities.

## VARYING FORTUNES OF THE HOWARDS

NORFOLK'S FAMILY WERE STAUNCH YORKISTS DURING THE WARS OF THE ROSES AND CONSEQUENTLY FELL FOUL OF THE NEW DYNASTY

When Norfolk was born in 1473, his family had reached a position of great wealth and power but the future duke would live to see his family fall and rise again in dramatic style thanks to the dynastic squabbles of the age.

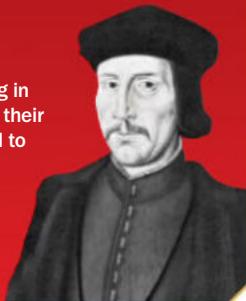
The Howards' English pedigree was impeccable and their most prized ancestor was Hereward the Wake, who led Anglo-Saxon resistance against William the Conqueror. However, the family's rise to prominence had been startlingly recent and was entirely due to the Wars of the Roses.

Norfolk's grandfather, John Howard, had been born a mere knight but he emerged as a staunch Yorkist who loyally served both Edward IV and Richard III as a soldier against the Lancastrians. It was Richard who created Howard as 1st Duke of Norfolk and hereditary Earl Marshal of England upon his dubious accession to the throne in 1483. Despite this rapid rise, the family would soon fall from grace two years later when Richard and the 1st Duke were both killed at the Battle of Bosworth. The duke was killed when an arrow struck him in the face and his son Thomas, Earl of Surrey was wounded and taken prisoner by the victorious Henry VII.

As prominent Yorkists, the Howards initially received no favours from the Tudors and Surrey was stripped of his titles and lands by an act of Parliament before being imprisoned in the Tower of London for three years. When a rebellion broke out in 1487, Surrey was offered a chance to escape imprisonment but he refused. This act convinced Henry VII of the earl's loyalty and he was released with his title restored in 1489.

From that point on, both Surrey and his eldest son Thomas strove to restore the family honour by serving in military and diplomatic capacities that culminated in their victory at Flodden. The duchy of Norfolk was returned to them and the pride of the Howards was restored.

*Right: John Howard 1st Duke of Norfolk established many of the family's traditional military functions, including naval duties and acting as Earl Marshal of England*



**"HIS MARTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS VARIED WIDELY FROM HUMILIATING DEFEATS TO GLORIOUS VICTORIES"**

Thomas Howard as he might have appeared in 1513 at the Battle of Flodden. At this stage, Howard would not become Duke of Norfolk for another 11 years and his highest title was as lord high admiral of England. English admirals did not wear naval uniforms in the 16th century and Howard is instead depicted wearing the coat of arms of his father the Earl of Surrey.

Howard's face is based on a portrait that he sat for Hans Holbein the Younger in the late 1530s, but in 1513 he would have been around 40 years of age so he has been given a more youthful look.

His armour is typical of high-quality metalwork (usually from Italy or Germany) that was produced in this period and as a Knight of the Garter, Howard wears the symbolic garter on his left leg. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, many English soldiers wielded the unfortunately named 'English Bastard Sword'.



On 22 May 1512, he was appointed lieutenant general of an army sent to Spain to cooperate with Ferdinand of Aragon in an Anglo-Spanish invasion of southern France. However, like many coalition campaigns of the period, it quickly fell apart and Howard was forced to return home. Nevertheless, he was promoted the following year to the office of Lord Admiral, a position he held until 1525.

By 1513, Henry VIII was getting into his stride as king and wanted to emulate his hero, Henry V, by invading France and recovering what he considered to be his 'rightful' possessions in the country. Many senior English advisors were troubled by Henry's aggressive stance and argued that a French war would very likely damage relations with France's old ally, Scotland. This was particularly worrying as James IV was Henry's brother-in-law and years of tactful diplomacy were at risk. Nevertheless, a group of younger councillors, including Howard, argued enthusiastically in favour of war and in the same year, Henry invaded France in a campaign that yielded little.

It was a different story on home territory, as James IV responded to Henry's invasion by launching his own into England. For weeks, the large Scottish army wreaked havoc in Northumberland but the Howards, under the Earl of Surrey, assembled an army and fought the Scots at Flodden Field on 9 September.

With Lord Thomas Howard leading the vanguard, the English were victorious over the Scots, who suffered one of the most catastrophic defeats in their history. James IV was killed alongside more than 10,000 of his men and Scotland was condemned to three generations of minors inheriting the throne.

### Ascendancy

Flodden was arguably the greatest English land battle of the Tudor Age and Howard's stock rose immeasurably as a result of his involvement. With his father now Duke of Norfolk, Howard became the Earl of Surrey and was promoted to key roles in Henry's government, including becoming a member of the Privy Council and Lord Treasurer, a position he would hold until 1546. His triumph at Flodden made Howard a trusted man to enforce security whenever trouble arose and this came in useful in 1517 during what became known as the 'Evil May Day Riots'.

The ominously named uprising took place in London where tensions had been rising among the local population against the many foreigners who had made the capital their home, with some becoming wealthy. The pressure burst when a broker called John Lincoln preached near Saint Paul's Cathedral that England's economic woes were caused by foreigners and called for, "...all Englishmen

to cherish and defend themselves, and to hurt and grieve aliens for the common weal." This xenophobic speech led to a mob rampaging through the city and looting and destroying property owned by foreigners. In response, Howard and his father led 1,300 retainers of their private army into London to quell the riot and when they saw him approach, the rioters, "...scattered by sudden fright, just like sheep at the sight of a wolf." Thanks to Howard's intervention, nobody was killed during the fighting but 13 leading rioters, including Lincoln, were later executed.

After Evil May Day, Howard was appointed as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on 10 March 1520 and spent months trying to pacify the country. The royal policy of the time was to subjugate Ireland by friendship rather than force but the bullish Howard remained unconvinced stating: "This land will never be brought to obeisance but only with compulsion and conquest." After 18 unfruitful months attempting to reconcile feuding Irish families and repeatedly requesting more money and troops, Howard was recalled in late 1521 after he contracted dysentery. By September 1522, he had recovered sufficiently to launch sudden attacks on what he considered to be England's most traditional enemy: France.

### Wasteful warfare

Despite the fact that Henry VIII could never realistically conquer France, he still craved military glory. When the King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V visited England in

*Below: King James IV of Scotland desperately fighting at Flodden. The sword-wielding Scots unsuccessfully clashed with English troops who fought with bill hooks*

**"FLODDEN WAS ARGUABLY THE GREATEST ENGLISH LAND BATTLE OF THE TUDOR AGE AND HOWARD'S STOCK ROSE IMMEASURABLY AS A RESULT OF HIS INVOLVEMENT"**



1522, an alliance was concluded where each monarch would contribute tens of thousands of soldiers to invade France. These armies were to be commanded by the Count of Buren and Howard, with the plan being to march on Boulogne and cause the maximum possible damage to the French king. Whatever the outcome, Howard was to remain in the field for three months and carry on the war without interruption.

Events did not go according to plan. Howard commanded a fleet to Brittany and proceeded to sack the town of Morlaix. He then immediately sailed home laden with booty, including three captured galleons, but subsequently returned to French shores.

Between August-September 1522, Howard led an Anglo-Burgundian force from English-held Calais into Picardy and Artois, on an expensive and destructive march that served no military purpose. The raid had to be abandoned in October as winter approached and Howard had achieved nothing but squander money that Henry's chief minister Cardinal Wolsey had raised by forced loans.

Wolsey was forced to summon Parliament when Henry requested more subsidies but fighting in France was severely reduced. Despite the waste, Howard was praised by the court's poet laureate John Skelton in an inferior poem "...the good Earl of Surrey/The French men he doth fray/And vexeth them day by day/With all the power he may. Of chivalry he is the flower/Our lord be his succour."

Howard's lack of real success in France went unnoticed by Henry, who appointed him Warden General of the Scottish marches the following year, as well as lieutenant general of the army against Scotland. The reason for this sudden promotion was that the Scots had taken advantage of the English invasion of France and marched a huge army across the border. Nonetheless, they were still chastened by their experiences at Flodden and when Howard himself moved to relieve the besieged Wark Castle, the Scots hurriedly retreated.

The earl was once again praised by Skelton who declared him "our strong captain," but Howard was starting to feel the strain of campaigning and reported that he was, "...decayed in body, as well as worn out in purse, by these four years during which he has been continually in the wars."

He temporarily retired to his estates and in 1524, he became Duke of Norfolk when his elderly father, the victorious commander at Flodden, died. Soon afterwards, Norfolk (as he was now styled) had to put down another rebellion, and this time it was closer to home.

In 1525, Wolsey attempted to impose a heavy tax on the clergy and laity to pay for the war in France, which was ironically known as the 'Amicable Grant'. The result was an uprising across several counties and included a march of 10,000 on the trading town of Lavenham.

Norfolk, along with the Duke of Suffolk, quickly raised troops but unlike his actions on Evil May Day and in Ireland, the two dukes decided to resolve the crisis by negotiations rather than by force. Using a sense of tact that was uncharacteristic, the uprising was resolved and the rebels publicly submitted to the king's authority. It was recognised that the dukes,

# BATTLE OF FLODDEN

"I EXPECT NO QUARTER AND I WILL GIVE NONE."

THIS HUGE CLASH SEALED THE FATE OF SCOTLAND FOR GENERATIONS AND CATAPOULTED THE HOWARDS TO POLITICAL DOMINANCE IN ENGLAND

Flodden was the culmination of perhaps the largest Scottish invasion of England and the Howards' leading role in defeating King James IV changed the course of Scottish history and affirmed their dominance at Henry VIII's court for the next 34 years.

In 1502, James IV and Henry VII had signed a treaty that James believed guaranteed Scottish independence. However, when Henry VIII became king he tore up the treaty and declared that James owed him homage. James was insulted and when Henry invaded France in 1513, the Scottish upheld an ancient alliance with the French and invaded England with more than 30,000 men. This army was disproportionately large compared to the small Scottish population, and made the invasion a national venture.

James initially took several major fortresses in Northumberland, and the Earl of Surrey and his son, Lord Admiral Thomas Howard, had to hastily assemble a smaller army of around 26,000 men. The two armies met on Flodden Hill with the Scots seizing the high ground. Surrey sent a message to James requesting to fight evenly on flatter terrain but the king bluntly refused, stating it was "not fitting for an earl to seek to command a king." Surrey then moved his army to block the Scottish northern route home and the battle began on 9 September 1513.

Although Surrey commanded the English army, Howard would lead the vanguard with a personal force of 5,000 experienced sea fighters. Before hostilities commenced, Howard sent a provocative message to James. Howard had killed a valued Scottish sea captain called Sir Andrew Barton in 1511 and he now bombastically wrote to James,

"As Lord High Admiral... I have come to justify the death of that pirate... I expect no quarter and will give none."

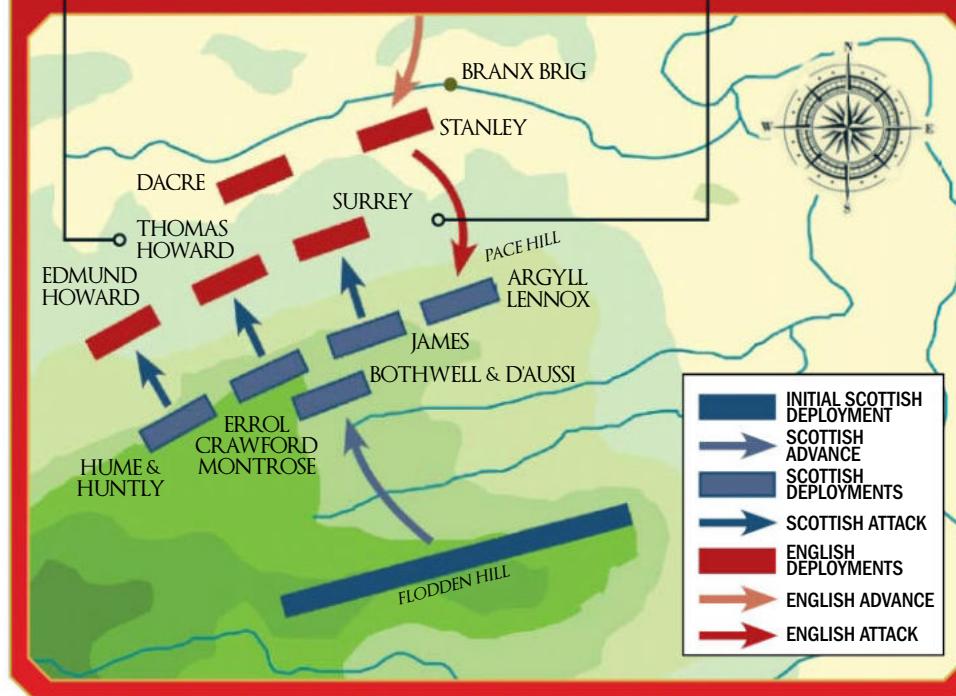
The opening stages of the battle involved an artillery bombardment and although the Scots had better-quality pieces, they made minimal impact thanks to inclement weather. James then launched a pikeman attack against the English right flank, which almost crumbled, but Surrey deployed his reserve and held the line. This was significant for Howard who was highly exposed to fighting in the centre but he rallied to confront a second Scottish attack. The Scots now abandoned their pikes in favour of swords but the English infantrymen fought with 'bills'. At 2.5 metres long, these shortened pikes were adapted scything tools that gave the English a distinct advantage over the sword-wielding Scots.

Now fighting on boggy ground, James and his troops still pushed the English back but they were subsequently attacked on three sides, including by archers who fired from the rear. The result was a devastating defeat. 10,000 Scots, including James and the flower of his nobility were killed compared to as little as 1,500 English casualties. James was the last British king to be killed in battle and Scotland was politically crippled for years.

The victors reaped the rewards with Surrey regaining his title of Duke of Norfolk and Howard assuming his father's previous title. Howard was praised by the Bishop of Durham who said, "My Lord Howard, the admiral, behaved nobly," at Flodden while his material rewards were an annuity of £20, two castles and 18 manors. Meanwhile, Scotland was so devastated by the defeat that even the harvest was temporarily abandoned.

Before the battle starts, Howard sends a provocative message to King James IV defending his murderous actions against Scottish seamen and pledging to fight to the death. James's response is unknown.

When the Scots first advance, the English right flank almost collapses, which then severely threatens Howard in the centre. The Earl of Surrey closes the gap with his reserve and the line holds.



"...so wisely handled themselves, that the commons were appeased" and they received praise for their "wisdom and gentleness."

In some ways the bloodless suppression of the Amicable Grant Rebellion was a great lesson for Norfolk. The enthusiastic warrior was learning that compromise could achieve the same ends as force and he used this experience to significant effect 11 years later.

### The Pilgrimage of Grace

From the late 1520s, England went through a tumultuous period as the Reformation took hold. Although continental protests against the Roman Catholic Church were largely based on the development of Lutheran Protestantism, the English equivalent was centred around Henry's desire to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon so he could marry Norfolk's niece Anne Boleyn. The king went to extraordinary lengths to satisfy his lust and produce a male heir with the result being an unprecedented break with the Papacy and the establishment of an independent Church of England.

Not surprisingly, this seismic uncoupling of nearly 1,000 years of close papal influence provoked Protestant ideas in England but the irony was that Henry, Norfolk and the vast majority of the English population were traditionally Catholic.

Henry's radical chief minister Thomas Cromwell saw things differently and began dissolving the monasteries in order to diminish papal authority in England and also line Henry's pockets with their vast revenues. This was highly approved of by the king but many commoners saw this as the first step to destroying their spiritual way of life. The result

## "THE KING WENT TO EXTRAORDINARY LENGTHS TO SATISFY HIS LUST AND PRODUCE A MALE HEIR"

was a political powder keg that exploded in the north of England in 1536.

The rebellion spread through six counties in northern England with as many as 40,000 people involved. The rebels were organised like an army and based their headquarters at Pontefract Castle. They presented themselves as a crusade and called themselves the 'Pilgrimage of Grace for the Commonweal'. Their demands included reconciling with Rome, the restoration of the monasteries and the removal of Henry's lowborn radical councillors, including Cromwell. This was a major uprising as the rebels controlled most of northern England but Henry offered no concessions. He ordered Norfolk to inflict direct military action and wreak vengeance, particularly after the rebels reopened some monasteries.

During this crisis, it was Norfolk, not Henry, who held the balance of power in England. Unlike Henry, he knew that he could not beat the rebels by force as his numerically inferior army would have been destroyed. This would have opened the road south to a rebellion that would not back down, particularly in the face of an unyielding king. Norfolk guaranteed the rebels a full pardon if they dispersed and promised that Henry would listen to their grievances. Because Henry and Norfolk were both religiously conservative, the rebels believed the duke and they dispersed in good faith. This tense truce did not last and when an unstable northern knight rebelled

in 1537, Henry pounced – not only executing the rebel leaders but also ordering hundreds more executions across northern England, which Norfolk supervised. By deceiving the rebels, Norfolk had saved Henry's throne and prevented civil war, but he had broken his word and it was highly apparent that the duke only paid lip service to the word 'honour'.

### Diminishing power

For five years after the Pilgrimage of Grace, Norfolk's position was unassailable and he even managed to help eliminate his powerful rival, Thomas Cromwell, who he considered to be a common upstart. Renewed outbreaks of war also secured his position but these turned out to be poisoned chalices.

Fighting on the Scottish border had intensified and Norfolk was declared captain-general, tasked with chastising the Scots. In October 1542, he razed and pillaged the Scottish Borders without encountering serious resistance, but it was an unrewarding campaign that cost the English exchequer and yielded little results. The duke's stock fell and Henry now looked to others for military leadership in Scotland. Norfolk was rattled and sought to have a prominent place in what would be Henry's last campaign in France.

In the early 1540s, the alliance between Henry VIII and Charles V was restored against France. Despite now being overweight and in declining health, Henry was determined

## A DRAMATIC FALL

### NORFOLK NEARLY LOST HIS LIFE IN THE DYING DAYS OF HENRY VIII'S REIGN THANKS TO HIS SON'S DABBING IN HERALDRY

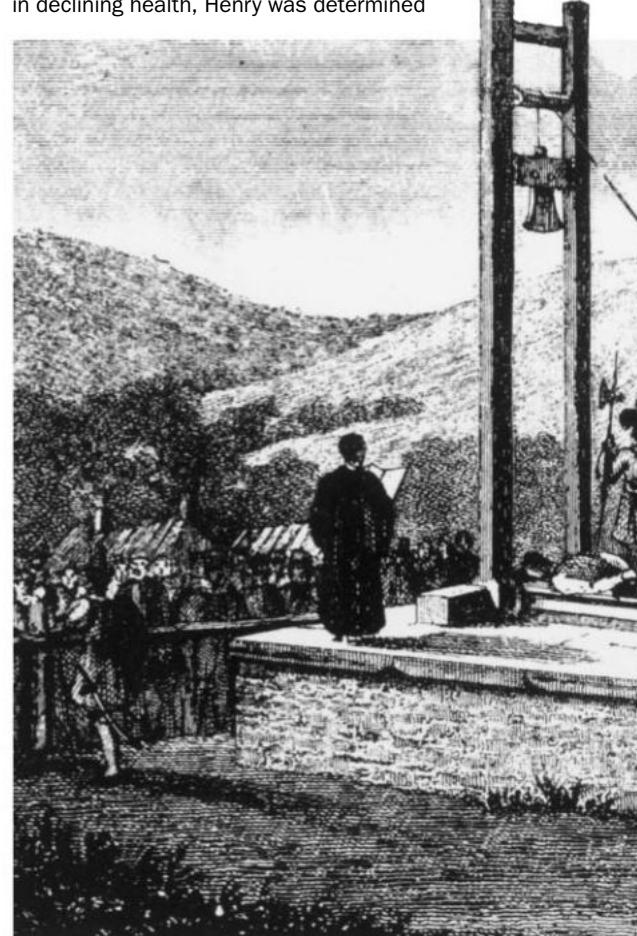
By the mid-1540s, Henry VIII was becoming increasingly unwell and mentally unstable and in this climate of uncertainty, his courtiers jostled for a toxic blend of influence and survival. The king's reputation for destroying

any signs of opposition were now well founded and in 1546, Norfolk felt the full force of Henry's terrible wrath.

The duke's eldest son, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was an arrogant and provocative character that quartered his coat of arms with symbols that displayed his Plantagenet ancestry on his mother's side. This appeared to imply monarchic ambitions and the paranoid Henry arrested both Surrey and Norfolk on 12 December 1546 and imprisoned them in the Tower of London.

Norfolk, who was no stranger to engineering the downfalls of other courtiers, begged to "have some word of comfort from his Majesty." When no comfort was forthcoming, Norfolk gambled on confessing his guilt to save his skin despite the fact that there were no real grounds for his treachery. No mercy was given and, in a bad reflection on his character, all of his family gave evidence against him.

Surrey was executed on 19 January 1547 and Henry approved Norfolk's execution, but the king died on 28 January before the sentence could be carried out. The Privy Council belatedly spared Norfolk's life but he remained imprisoned and his estates were plundered.



to invade France again and in June 1543, Norfolk declared war in the king's name. Henry himself was no longer able to lead his men on campaign and the English army was split in two. Norfolk commanded one force while the Duke of Suffolk commanded the other. Suffolk successfully besieged Boulogne, capturing it in September 1544, but Norfolk struggled to take Montreuil. Henry never specified what he wanted Norfolk to achieve and the duke repeatedly complained about the lack of provisions and munitions in his army. He was eventually forced to raise the Siege of Montreuil and withdrew to Calais.

For his failure, Norfolk received a stinging rebuke from Henry and his position never truly recovered. By now he was realistic about the extent of English military power abroad and although Boulogne was successfully occupied, he commented that he, "...knoweth the realm of England is not possible to bear the charges" of holding the town for long. His prediction was proved correct when Boulogne was returned to France in 1550, only six years after its capture.

Henry now became increasingly unhealthy and mentally unstable and by the time he died in 1547, Norfolk had fallen so far from royal favour he was imprisoned in the Tower of London on tenuous charges of treason. His life was spared only because Henry died before the duke's warrant was signed and Norfolk spent the entire reign of Edward VI incarcerated.

In 1553, Norfolk was finally released and pardoned by Mary I. He was restored as a privy councillor and as Earl Marshal even bore the crown at the queen's coronation. By now, he was 80 years old but he still had one last service to perform for the Tudors.

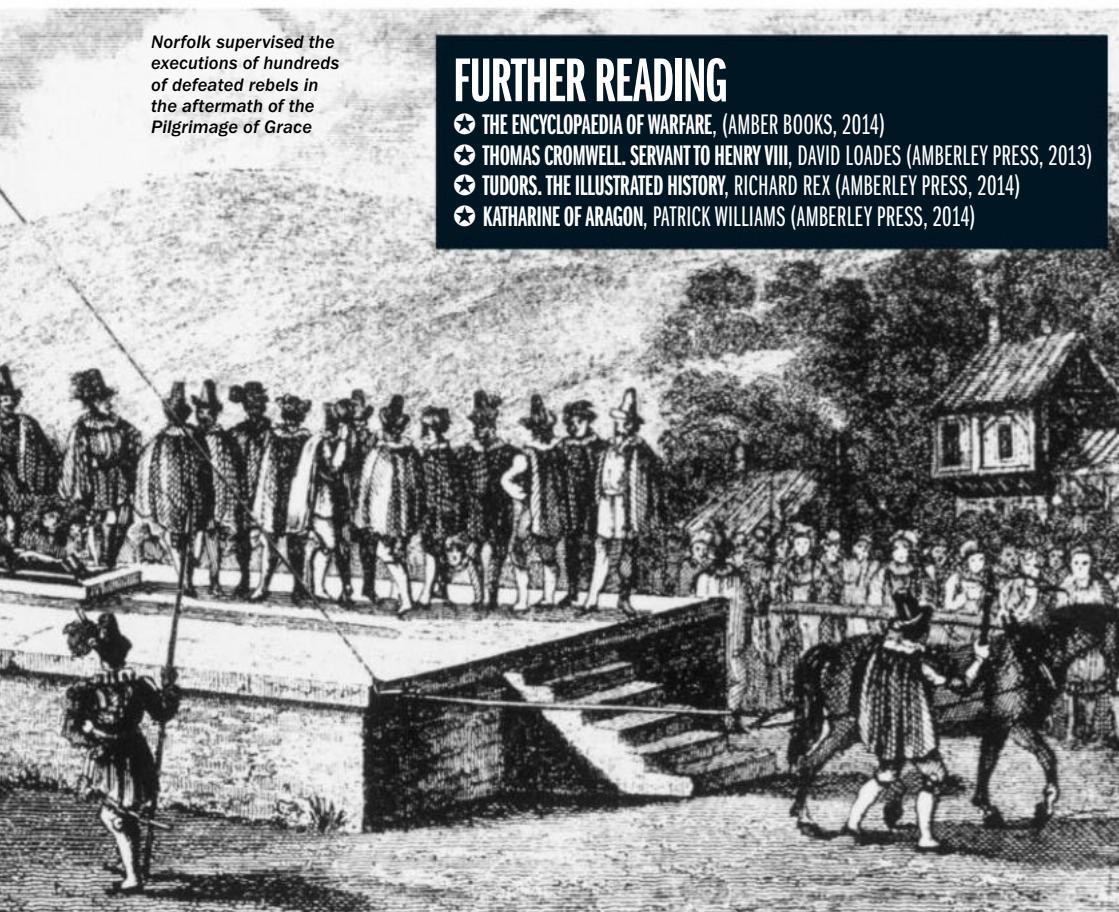
*Norfolk supervised the executions of hundreds of defeated rebels in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace*

In January 1554, Sir Thomas Wyatt led a rebellion from Kent that opposed Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain. Having been appointed lieutenant general, the octogenarian Norfolk led an army that included around 500 Londoners to confront Wyatt's force at Rochester. However, the Londoners in Norfolk's army defected to the rebels at Rochester Bridge and the duke hastily retreated. His army was now, "...both void of men and victory, leaving behind six pieces of ordnance and treasure." Other captains eventually crushed the rebellion but Norfolk was now in poor health. One contemporary as described him, "...by long imprisonment diswonted from the knowledge of our malicious world."

Norfolk died on his estate at Kenninghall in August 1554 at the age of 81. Although he was ruthless, reactionary, ambitious and by all accounts quite fearsome, Thomas Howard was above all loyal to his Tudor masters throughout his long life. His personality was well suited to serve his bloodthirsty overlords, as it contained a dark undercurrent with a capacity for violence and even brutality. This was markedly evident at Flodden, his raids into both Scotland and France and his clampdown on the Pilgrimage of Grace. In this sense he was a perfect henchman for Henry VIII, who himself famously displayed a vicious streak that possibly bordered on psychosis. For men like Norfolk, knightly notions of chivalry in warfare meant nothing and it is not unreasonable to state he was a thug in ducal robes. Consequently, in both victory and defeat, the brutal duke channelled the Tudors' relentless efforts to exert the royal supremacy of England, regardless of the dire results.

## FURTHER READING

- ★ THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF WARFARE, (AMBER BOOKS, 2014)
- ★ THOMAS CROMWELL. SERVANT TO HENRY VIII, DAVID LOADES (AMBERLEY PRESS, 2013)
- ★ TUDORS. THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY, RICHARD REX (AMBERLEY PRESS, 2014)
- ★ KATHARINE OF ARAGON, PATRICK WILLIAMS (AMBERLEY PRESS, 2014)



# HENRY VIII'S ARMOUR

Contrary to legend, Henry VIII was not obese for much of his life and in the 1510s he cut an athletic figure. This is demonstrated in this suit of armour that he commissioned in the late 1510s. With the advent of gunpowder, armour was becoming increasingly irrelevant on the battlefield but it was reaching its zenith in terms of quality. This particular suit was made for Henry in time for the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. Its design includes a distinctive skirt that followed contemporary court fashions. It is a deliberate show of grandeur that a blacksmith can recreate every crease and fold of fabric clothes.

The armour was produced for tournament jousting and unlike previous suits it fully enclosed the wearer. The craftsmanship of this piece was so good that NASA used it to provide inspiration for their space suits.

*This suit of armour was finished in just three months, with the metal skirt or tonlet carrying detailed embellishments*



Images: Alamy

Operator's Handbook

# JUNKERS JU 87 STUKA

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

After years of secretive development, the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bomber emerged as a feared weapon of the Luftwaffe

## JUNKERS JU 87 STUKA DIVE BOMBER

**ORIGIN:** JUNKERS ENGINEER, HERMANN POHLMANN  
**LENGTH:** 11 METRES  
**RANGE:** 600 KILOMETRES  
**ENGINE:** WATER COOLED, INVERTED V-12 JUNKERS JUMO 211  
**PRIMARY WEAPON:** 1,100-POUND BOMB PAYLOAD  
**SECONDARY WEAPON:** TWO WING-MOUNTED 7.92MM MG 17 MACHINE GUNS; SINGLE REAR-FACING MG 17 IN COCKPIT  
**CREW:** 2

*The Junkers Ju 87 Stuka is one of the most recognizable and vilified aircraft of the war. It spread terror and destruction along with spearheading the aerial phase of the blitzkrieg*

**T**he Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bomber – its nickname a shortened version of the German word for dive bomber, ‘Sturzkampfflugzeug’ – remains one of the most legendary aircraft of World War II. Its champion was Luftwaffe General Ernst Udet, who was second only to Manfred von Richthofen as the highest scoring German fighter ace of World War I, claiming 62 aerial victories.

While participating in a stunt-flying exhibition in the US in 1931, Udet witnessed a demonstration of the Curtiss Hawk II, a superb American combination fighter and dive bomber. Captivated by the plane’s precision bombing

**Below:** A squadron of Stuka dive bombers hold a tight formation in preparation to wing over into their characteristically steep dives



and performance, he procured two Hawks for assessment in Germany.

At the same time, German aircraft manufacturers were working to circumvent the restrictions on offensive aircraft imposed under the Treaty of Versailles. The Junkers Flugzeugwerke AG had purchased a manufacturing facility in Sweden and developed the K 47 there, while the Henschel firm’s Hs 123 also showed promise as a dive bomber.

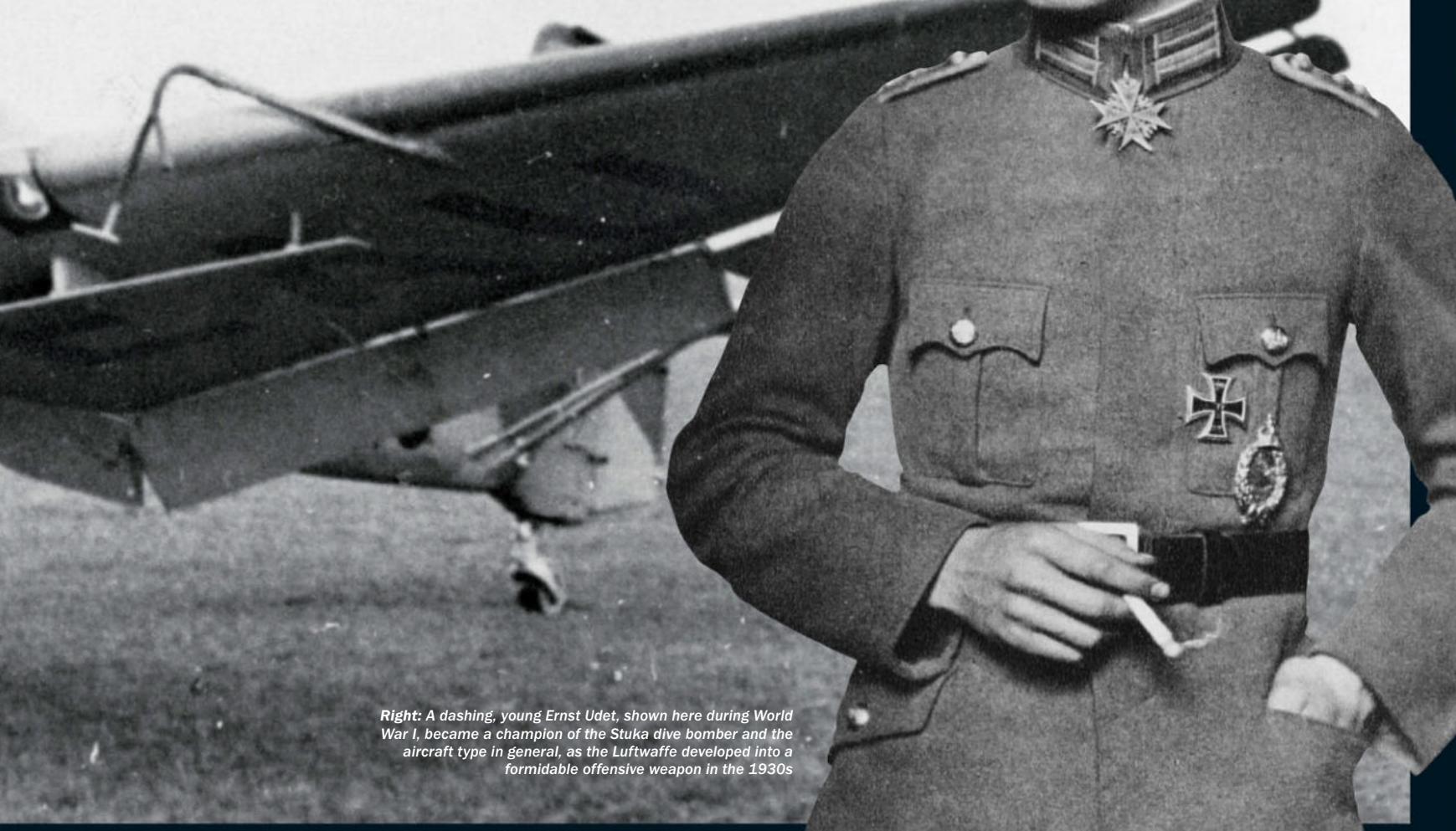
Both firms exerted influence on the progress of the Ju 87 under Junkers engineer Hermann Pohlmann, who had been working on dive bomber prototypes since the late 1920s. The all-metal Ju 87 developed into an excellent dive-bombing platform, its fixed landing gear adding to the plane’s sturdy construction and assisting the dive brakes. Although several engines were utilised, the inverted V-12 water-cooled Junkers Jumo 211 powered the first production models of the most common Ju 87B series.

The first Ju 87 prototype flew on 17 September 1935 and the pre-production Ju 87A began rolling off assembly lines the following year. During WWII, the Stuka became a feared aerial weapon, forever identified with the Nazi Blitzkrieg, or Lightning War. By the end of the war, more than 6,000 Stukas had been manufactured, with over a dozen variants in seven major series.

*The distinctive inverted gull wings and fixed landing gear with spats make this Ju 87 easily identifiable.*



**“THE ALL-METAL JU 87 DEVELOPED INTO AN EXCELLENT DIVE-BOMBING PLATFORM, ITS FIXED LANDING GEAR ADDING TO THE PLANE’S STURDY CONSTRUCTION AND ASSISTING THE DIVE BRAKES”**



**Right:** A dashing, young Ernst Udet, shown here during World War I, became a champion of the Stuka dive bomber and the aircraft type in general, as the Luftwaffe developed into a formidable offensive weapon in the 1930s

## ENGINE

The Junkers Jumo 211 inverted V-12 water-cooled engine was produced in greater numbers than any other German aircraft powerplant during World War II. In response to a 1934 appeal from the Luftwaffe Air Ministry, Junkers engineer Doctor Franz Josef Neugebauer led the team that completed the prototype Jumo 211 the following year. The Jumo 211 series was the primary powerplant of Luftwaffe multi-engine bombers throughout the war, powering the Junkers Ju 87, Ju 88 and Heinkel He 111 models. Nearly 70,000 were manufactured by 1945. The 14 variants in the Jumo 211 series generated up to 1,500 horsepower.

*Right: Widely distributed to manufacturing facilities of Luftwaffe aircraft, the Junkers Jumo 211 inverted V-12 engine powered numerous types during World War II*

**"THE JUMO 211 SERIES  
WAS THE PRIMARY  
POWERPLANT OF LUFTWAFFE  
MULTI-ENGINE BOMBERS  
THROUGHOUT THE WAR,  
POWERING THE JUNKERS JU  
87, JU 88 AND HEINKEL HE  
111 MODELS"**



*The exhaust pipes of the Junkers Jumo 211 engine jut out from the cowling. The engine proved durable and performed under the harshest climate conditions, particularly on the Eastern Front and in North Africa*



*Left: A stuka Ju-87 being overhauled. The plane featured numerous innovative components that were unique at the time of its introduction into combat*



A large bomb sits fixed to the underside of a Stuka by its external cradle apparatus. The plane carried multiple sizes of ordnance along with machine guns that were used to ward off enemy fighter planes and to strafe ground targets



*Left: In this chilling frame, a Stuka dive bomber unleashes its deadly cargo against enemy positions. It appears that the plane has delivered a large anti-armour or high explosive bomb along with a pair of smaller fragmentation bombs*

## ARMAMENT

A principal weapon of the Blitzkrieg, the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka devastated enemy troop concentrations, communication centres and fortified positions. Its primary weapon was its bomb load, including ordnance such as 2,200-pound anti-armour bombs; 1,100-pound high-explosive bombs, which were effective against fortifications; 500-pound general-purpose bombs; and 110-pound fragmentation bombs, which were deadly against exposed infantry. Early variants carried two 7.92mm MG 15 or MG 17 machine guns, one firing forwards and one to the rear, for air defence and strafing. Others mounted an additional forward-firing machine gun. The Ju 87G, a tank-buster with two wing-mounted Rheinmetall 37mm BK cannon, appeared on the Eastern Front in 1943.

**“EARLY VARIANTS CARRIED TWO 7.92MM MG 15 OR MG 17 MACHINE GUNS, ONE FIRING FORWARDS AND ONE TO THE REAR, FOR AIR DEFENCE AND STRAFING”**



*On a misty morning a Luftwaffe sentry guards an airfield where Junkers Ju 87 dive bombers are being fitted with ordnance for the day's combat mission. Bombs lie awaiting attachment to the dive bombers that sit on the grass airfield*

**"EASILY DISTINGUISHED WITH ITS INVERTED GULL WINGS AND FIXED LANDING GEAR SPORTING LARGE SPATS, THE JUNKERS JU 87 STUKA DIVE BOMBER CONJURED UP IMAGES OF A SINISTER BIRD OF PREY"**

ROYAL AIR FORCE museum

The Ju 87 pictured is exhibited in the RAF Museum, London. For more, visit [www.rafmuseum.org.uk](http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk)



## COCKPIT

The two-man Junkers Ju 87 dive bomber featured a cockpit with standard instrumentation, including the centre cluster of gauges used for 'instrument flying', such as the altimeter, compass, horizon indicator and a variometer to denote the rate of climb or descent. A ventilation nozzle for the flight deck was centred at the top of the panel while the Revi C/12D gunsight was offset to the right. The tachometer, boost meter and primer pump could be found below. The clock, radiator valve actuation buttons and power control switch were to the left with auxiliary consoles on each side. The bomb release trigger was housed on the control stick.



*Below: The inverted gull wings and fixed landing gear with covering spats are readily visible in these artist's renderings of the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka*



## DESIGN

Easily distinguished with its inverted gull wings and fixed landing gear sporting large spats, the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bomber conjured up images of a sinister bird of prey. The plane included numerous state-of-the-art features, such automatic engine and propeller controls, along with an automatic pull-up dive brake

system that activated with the release of the bomb payload, assisting in pulling out of a dive when the pilot was susceptible to blackout due to high G-forces. Pilots appreciated the Stuka's sturdy airframe, which incorporated aluminium sheeting, alloys called Pantal and Elektron, which contained titanium and magnesium, and steel.

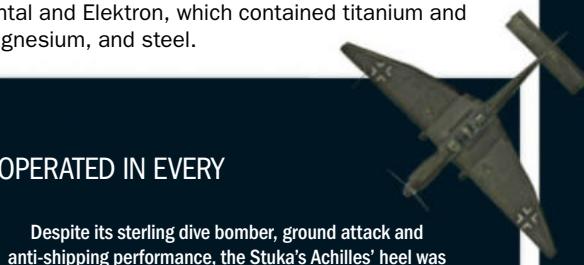
## SERVICE HISTORY

### AN ICON OF THE NAZI BLITZKRIEG, THE JU 87 OPERATED IN EVERY LUFTWAFFE THEATRE OF WORLD WAR II

At 4.36am on 1 September 1939, three German Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bombers screamed down on bridges across the Vistula River in Poland, executing the first air raid of World War II. The Ju 87 became an early scourge east and west as the Blitzkrieg ravaged Europe. Employed as flying artillery, Stukas inflicted heavy casualties and many pilots had already honed their skills with the Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War.

Nine Ju 87 bomb groups were deployed to Poland, flying over 6,000 missions. One pilot remembered, "We came across throngs of Polish troops, against which our 100-pound fragmentation bombs were deadly. After that, we almost went down on the deck firing our machine guns. The confusion was indescribable."

The Stuka was also a weapon of terror. Some were equipped with sirens, nicknamed Jericho Trumpets, which wailed as the planes plummeted, devastating civilian targets such as the cities of Warsaw and Rotterdam.



Despite its sterling dive bomber, ground attack and anti-shipping performance, the Stuka's Achilles' heel was exposed during the Battle of Britain in 1941. The slow-flying aircraft confronted sustained, co-ordinated defences in the fighters and pilots of the RAF. In six weeks, 92 Stukas were damaged or destroyed. In 10 days, more than 20 per cent of those engaged were lost and Luftwaffe chief, Hermann Göring withdrew them from the campaign.

Nevertheless, Ju 87s remained viable throughout the European Theatre; numerous variants with powerplant and design modifications were introduced. Colonel Hans-Ulrich Rudel, the most successful Stuka pilot, flew several types, including the tank-killer Ju 87G equipped with 37mm cannons. Rudel, the sole recipient of the Knights Cross with Gold Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds, destroyed more than 500 Soviet tanks, at least 300 other vehicles, sank a cruiser and damaged a battleship. The legend of the Stuka spawned the legend of Rudel.

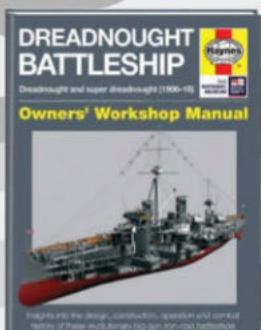
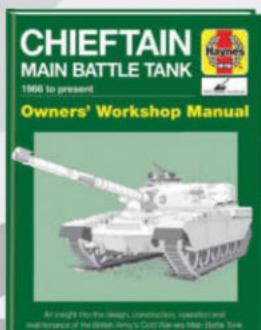
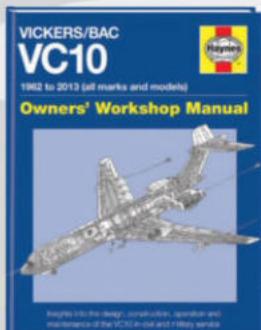
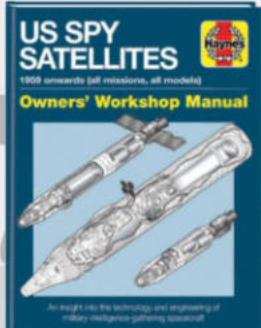
**"WE CAME ACROSS THRONGS OF POLISH TROOPS, AGAINST WHICH OUR 100-POUND FRAGMENTATION BOMBS WERE DEADLY. AFTER THAT, WE ALMOST WENT DOWN ON THE DECK FIRING OUR MACHINE GUNS. THE CONFUSION WAS INDESCRIBABLE"**



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# AN INTERVIEW WITH PADDY ASHDOWN

# WARNINGS FROM HISTORY

WORDS TOM GARNER

Speaking in support of this year's Harrogate History Festival and his new book, *Game Of Spies*, the former leader of the Liberal Democrats discusses his military career and what history can teach today's politicians

**F**or 11 years between 1988-99, Paddy Ashdown led the newly formed Liberal Democrats to become the third largest party in British parliament and since that time he has become one of the most respected politicians in the UK. However, part of his prestige lies in his adventurous life prior to entering politics, as an officer in both the Royal Marines and the Special Boat Service.

Ashdown's service included colonial wars during the dying days of the British Empire and peacekeeping operations in Northern Ireland at the height of the Troubles. Even as a politician, Ashdown witnessed the devastating consequences of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s and was an early voice in the mainstream calling for an intervention. Standing down from the Commons in 2001 to take a seat in the House of Lords, he remains an authoritative voice on today's conflicts and on the role history can play in preventing confrontations in the future.

## Officer of the empire

Born in 1941, Ashdown's military career was never in doubt but the young boy knew his own mind, "From the age of about four, my family had chosen that I would join the Royal Navy. In truth I think I realised the navy wasn't quite for me. I had a naval scholarship, which paid for my last years at school and at that stage the Royal Marines came into view. I was never very good at maths and I'm not sure I could have done the maths to get into the navy." Ashdown has no

**"I'M HORRIFIED, THE PARALLELS WITH THE 1930S AND TODAY ARE REALLY FRIGHTENING"**

regrets about pursuing a military career, rather than continuing his studies, "Going to university was something I would have liked to have done, and I did indeed get a place, but in retrospect the Royal Marines was exactly the right thing for young Paddy Ashdown to be doing. I would have wasted my time at university with doubtless too much beer and girls."

Ashdown joined the marines in 1959 when he was still a teenager and remained in service until 1972. During this time, he served as an officer and first saw active service in the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation (1963-66), a largely jungle-based conflict that formed part of what Ashdown calls, "one of those little wars at the end of the empire." His experiences in Borneo were in marked contrast to anything he had done before, "I was a young officer in charge of 20 marines, in an outpost in the jungle, four hours march from the nearest headquarters, being supplied by helicopter over a period of about three or four months fighting guerrillas. It was quite an eye-opener and obviously you mature quite fast under those circumstances." The conflict was not just a unique experience but also a steep education, "I have to say that I learned a lot from my sergeant because he knew a lot more about warfare than I did. I had to learn from him and learn very fast but I loved it."

## The Special Boat Service

As a keen soldier Ashdown sought to further his career, so he applied to join the Special Boat Service (SBS). Formed in 1940, the SBS is the naval sister unit of the more famous SAS and was, and still is, just as secretive. It has similar operational capabilities to the SAS but the primary expertise in the SBS is operating in maritime, amphibious and riverine



Above: A teenage Ashdown training to be a Royal Marine in 1959. A place at university was turned down in favour of military service



Above: Ashdown (centre) on a parachute exercise in 1961 aged between 19-20

"THE QUINTESSENTIAL  
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VANISH AT THE  
MOMENT OF CRISIS"

*Left: The Liberal Democrat  
grandee believes that politicians  
should know more history*

## WARNINGS FROM HISTORY

environments. Its role is to carry out daring, undercover raids with small, highly trained teams and its members are considered to be elite military personnel.

It was this mysterious force that Ashdown became a member of after leaving Borneo and serving in the Persian Gulf, "I did parachute training in the base at Poole and then was immediately appointed as training officer in the SB units. In 1965, I was sent out to command 2 SBS in the Far East. We were just reaching the end in Borneo and we were involved in operations and developing new techniques. At that stage we tested a particular technique called 'Goldfish' for getting out of submarines and returning to them without the submarine having to break the surface."

Ashdown is quiet about the nature of operations in the SBS but his time in the unit proved to be a political awakening. He has previously said he became a liberal during this period and he puts it down entirely to the quality of the men he was commanding, "You often find that after active service, opinion can swing left. Some of it is because of that sense of the brotherhood of man. You rely on each other: I relied on them and they relied on me. At that stage, the men that I was privileged enough to command were, by any standards, better at the job that we were doing than probably I was. It was an accident of birth that I was in charge of them and not the other way around."

The lessons his men taught him stuck with Ashdown for life, "I learnt a huge amount from them and I became utterly convinced that you could create a nation to be a meritocracy. I hate the class system and I thought that if we could create a nation in which people progress according to their ability, and the men I worked with had a high ability indeed, then this would be a better country."

This realisation had practical foundations when the SBS were on operations, "I was never one for giving orders. They were given, I hope,

more casually. Whenever we went on something difficult I'd come up with a plan but my team would sit around together and often improve it. So from that I learnt the value and importance of the individual, the fact that you can trust individuals and that you should empower people. Judging people according to ability and the dependence you have on each other in difficult circumstances is one of the bases of liberalism."

### Peacekeeping at home

From 1967, Ashdown went to Hong Kong to take up a full-time interpreter's course in Mandarin Chinese, a decision that would later affect his military career, but when he returned to Britain in 1970, he was given command of a Royal Marines company in Belfast to try to keep in the peace in the emerging Troubles. The sectarian conflict that had erupted in Northern Ireland was distressing for Ashdown, who had largely grown up in Donaghadee near the capital, "I had been involved in peacekeeping abroad but I had been brought up just outside Belfast so this was my city and it was a very wrenching, emotional experience to suddenly protect the peace."

Through his familiarity, Ashdown was not entirely shocked at how the situation had disintegrated, "I was the son of a Catholic father and a Protestant mother and had been brought up in Northern Ireland. We all knew very well the Troubles were coming up, I could sense them in my bones, and so it didn't come as a surprise. What did come as a surprise if I'm really honest, is the fact that what I had been doing to keep the peace in Aden and Singapore was happening in Northern Ireland and my home city was being treated as a colonial hell."

Ashdown believes that part of the problem in the province was the behaviour of some sections of the British military, "We were the occupying troops, although some people tend to see this the other way around. Some of the attitudes that were around... not in the Royal Marines I should say, but elsewhere in the military there were

certain colonial attitudes and I realised with a shock that they were acting as maybe I had acted in the past abroad."

Towards the end of his time in Northern Ireland, Ashdown was approached by the Foreign Office who was interested in recruiting him because of a shortage of Mandarin speakers. With his interpreter's training, Ashdown was a good choice to join the diplomatic service and he was beginning to feel the need for a change, "I think it was the experience of soldiering in Belfast that affected my decision. It wasn't the danger, but I thought we just weren't trying to do things as well as we could and I couldn't influence people into a different direction. I thought the imperial-based attitudes that we took in the early days, such as internments, were very ill advised."

Nevertheless, leaving the armed forces felt bittersweet, "I have to say that I was very sad. I liked the Royal Marines but I decided I needed to move on and take up the position offered to me by the Foreign Office and join them." Even today, 44 years after he left the marines, Ashdown still takes pride in being a former member, "I loved my time. I didn't move on because I suddenly disliked military life, I'm still in contact with those people and I regularly attend SBS reunions and try not to miss them. I'm also very proud indeed of having been a Royal Marine and having had the extreme privilege of commanding marines on active service."

Having seen considerable active service in different theatres of operations, Ashdown's military career was a significant and formative part of his life. Although his liberalism found its roots in the SBS, he believes that his time in the armed forces did not overtly permeate his political life, "The SBS illuminated the thoughts and beliefs in me, which you would call liberalism. It also convinced me that it was the right political stance to take but beyond that it didn't overtly affect my politics. People always know about Paddy Ashdown, the soldier,

**"I HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN PEACEKEEPING ABROAD BUT I HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP JUST OUTSIDE BELFAST SO THIS WAS MY CITY AND IT WAS A VERY WRENCHING, EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE TO SUDDENLY PROTECT THE PEACE"**

Ashdown (left) on patrol in the dense forest of Gunong Raya. Royal Marines had to be supplied by helicopter



Ashdown (right) on active service in Borneo during Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation. The young officer was in charge of a platoon of marines



Scuba diving with the SBS. Ashdown took part in developing techniques for surfacing undetected from submarines

*Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Queens Own Highlanders conduct a patrol in the jungle of Brunei*



## THE INDONESIA-MALAYSIA CONFRONTATION (1963-66)

THIS UNDECLARED CONFLICT SAW COMMONWEALTH TROOPS DEFEND THE NEWLY FORMED COUNTRY OF MALAYSIA AT THE TAIL END OF IMPERIAL DOMINANCE

Paddy Ashdown's first experience of combat occurred during a little-known conflict in Borneo during the decolonisation of the British Empire. What was known as the 'Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation' originated from Indonesia's opposition to creation of Malaysia.

The Indonesian president believed that the creation of the Federation of Malaysia was an attempt by Britain to maintain colonial rule behind a mask of independence granted to its former colonies in South-East Asia. Although war was never officially declared, armed men, who took part in propaganda and sabotage missions, undertook cross-border raids into Malaysia throughout 1963. By 1964, regular units of the Indonesian Army also

became involved and a Commonwealth force was assembled to deal with the crisis that included British, New Zealand, Australian and Gurkha troops.

The Commonwealth forces were asked to stay in Borneo at the request of the Malaysian government after serious border raids in Sabah and Sarawak. Working with Malaysian forces, the Commonwealth troops engaged in successful offensives against the Indonesians even though Singapore was rocked by several bombing attacks. In 1965, internal fighting broke out in Indonesia that resulted in a military coup. The victorious General Suharto became president and ended the confrontation by signing a peace treaty with Malaysia and normalising relations in 1966.

but in fact, it's almost the least important part of my life. It tends to be forgotten that I was in the Foreign Office and before I became a MP I had also been on the unemployment register as a youth worker. You bring to bear all those experiences and what you've done, and grow on the insights you provide."

Despite this Ashdown does acknowledge that his military career did give him one valuable insight into conducting politics, "The thing that being in the services does give you, and perhaps it's missing from most politicians these days, is our judgement. The quintessential quality of a politician, the one they cannot do without, is moral courage. Unless you have courage then everything else, all your other talents, vanish at the moment of crisis. That's a really important issue for me and I learnt that in the Royal Marines."

### Bosnia

After leaving the armed forces, Ashdown had various jobs before entering parliament as the Liberal MP for Yeovil in 1983. When the Liberal Party merged with the Social Democratic Party to form the Liberal Democrats in 1988, he was elected as their first leader and was made a privy councillor in 1989. Now at the heart of British politics, Ashdown kept his eye on international affairs, which came to a head in 1992 when the Bosnian War broke out.

This bloody conflict, the third in the multi-part breakup of Yugoslavia, saw the largest case of genocide in Europe since WWII. The West's response to the growing crisis was slow but Ashdown flew to Bosnia in August 1992 where he witnessed recently uncovered concentration camps set up by Bosnian Serb forces to intern Bosniaks and Croats, regardless of age or gender. Tens of thousands of people were interned at the camps and hundreds were killed. It was an observation of the darkest element of war that deeply affected Ashdown, "I famously became, among those who came to help me, almost impossible in refugee camps. I just couldn't stop the tears starting in my eyes. I couldn't prevent looking at these people and

**"I'M ALSO VERY PROUD INDEED OF HAVING BEEN A ROYAL MARINE AND HAVING HAD THE EXTREME PRIVILEGE OF COMMANDING MARINES ON ACTIVE SERVICE"**

seeing my sister, wife and children, so it came as a deep and profound emotional shock. I've always been utterly perplexed, puzzled and bewildered by the capacity of man's inhumanity to man and to see it face to face was a very moving experience."

Although he had extensive experience of war, Ashdown was unprepared for what he uncovered in the Bosnian Serb-held territory in the north of the country, "When you're a soldier, you see life on the frontline, what you don't always see is how it affects people who are swept up in war but are not on the frontline. Nothing prepares you for going to a death camp. Nothing prepares you to see the horrors of Trnopolje with all those women and children. Nothing prepares you for the fact that two or three days after you've left, the Serbs rounded them all up, took them to the edge of a cliff and machine-gunned them. There's no preparation for that and you never forget it all your life."

As a result of his early exposure of the concentration camps, Ashdown put continual pressure on the British government for Western military intervention in the region. The United Nations eventually responded to growing international condemnation of the conflict and in 1995, the war was brought to an awkward conclusion. Seven years later, Ashdown was appointed as the UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. His position was sometimes compared to that of a colonial governor; he had the power to issue decrees, sack politicians and judges and establish investigative commissions into massacres committed during the conflict. When he stepped down in 2006, Ashdown was, and arguably remains, one of the most experienced British commentators on international affairs, both military and diplomatic.

### Syria, "war crimes" and history

In 2016, Ashdown has much to say on the state of international conflicts in an increasingly divided world, including the horrendous civil war in Syria. On 11 October 2016, the Conservative MP and former International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell compared Russian intervention in Syria to the events of the 1930s during an emergency debate in the House of Commons, "We are witnessing events that match the behaviour of the Nazi regime in Guernica in Spain." Ashdown agrees, "I think it's a good comparison. There are other comparisons, such as Sarajevo for example, but what's happening in Aleppo is ten times worse. The difference is that in Aleppo's case, a foreign power is acting in a way similar to the way the Germans acted in Guernica." Ashdown believes the only way forward is dialogue, "Politicians have to hold very firmly to the understanding that in the end there is only one way to stop what's going on in Syria and that's peace. You're going to have to sit down and negotiate with these people."

At the same time, Ashdown is scathing of the rhetoric used by other politicians in proclaiming war crimes in Syria. In the same Commons debate as Mitchell, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson condemned the Russian bombing of Aleppo, saying that "intentionally attacking a hospital amounts to a war crime. In recent history, war criminals have been successfully prosecuted decades after their offences." Ashdown is unequivocal, "While it's right to identify that the way the Russians are behaving is disgraceful, I think it's clumsy, immature, grandstanding politics to call them war criminals. It's not up to politicians, it's up to courts."

With his background in uncovering war crimes, Ashdown knows how serious and

complicated the accusation is, "It's far more nuanced and to dub someone a 'war criminal' is a very big word. I had told [Slobodan] Milošević about what I was experiencing the day before, when I was being bombarded by the army and saw defenceless villages. Now he was in my opinion a war criminal and he ended up in The Hague. Indeed the next time I saw him I was at The Hague giving evidence against him. However, I think calling a leader a war criminal in public is not a judgement that a politician should make. If you bandy the accusation about, you just devalue the term completely."

Ashdown believes that if conflicts are to be resolved and prevented, then knowledge of history is essential. In a 2007 article written for *The Guardian*, he wrote in relation to the Iraq War, "When I look to the future in Iraq, I start by studying the past." Asked if this still applies, Ashdown remains convinced of history's value in shaping policy, "The bottom line is our politics is plagued by its professionalisation. Nobody has done anything else but be a politician and I think they suffer and the nation suffers as a consequence. The other point that I think is worth making is that none of them study history. There is a saying that goes, 'Those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it' and so they can't see the historical parallels. Of course, no parallel is ever perfect

**"IF THERE IS ONE COMPULSORY SUBJECT THAT I WOULD LIKE OUR LEADERS AND POLITICIANS TO LEARN, ITS HISTORY BECAUSE UNLESS YOU KNOW THE PAST, YOU HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING THE PRESENT"**



*Left: The badge of the Special Boat Service. Members of the SBS have to be able to canoe five miles at night in the open sea and then march for 30 miles upon landing*



*Ashdown scuba diving under an MFV vessel during his time with the SBS. Undercover maritime operations are the specialty of this elite unit*

## THE BOSNIAN WAR (1992-95)

THE CONFLICT IN THE BALKAN COUNTRY DREW INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION AND WAS A THROWBACK TO THE WORST EXCESSES OF WORLD WAR II

The breakup of the multinational Yugoslavia was led in part by an outburst of Serbian nationalism under Slobodan Milošević that inflicted war on breakaway states such as Croatia, Slovenia and most notoriously Bosnia and Herzegovina in the name of protecting the Serbian minorities that lived in those countries.

Bosnian territory comprised of three main ethnic groups: the predominately Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and the largely Muslim Bosniaks. The Serb minority made up 32 per cent of Bosnia's population and the country's independence was recognised in 1992 by America and Europe. The Bosnian Serbs responded by laying siege to Sarajevo and

committing ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population with massacres, forced repopulation and the establishment of concentration camps. Western responses to the crisis were slow until 8,000 Muslim men were murdered at Srebrenica, the worst massacre in Europe since WWII.

The killings led to an extensive NATO bombing campaign against Serb positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina between August-October 1995 and this finally brought peace. Up to 200,000 Muslim civilians had been murdered, 20,000 were missing while 2 million more became refugees. US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke described the conflict as, "the greatest failure of the West since the 1930s."

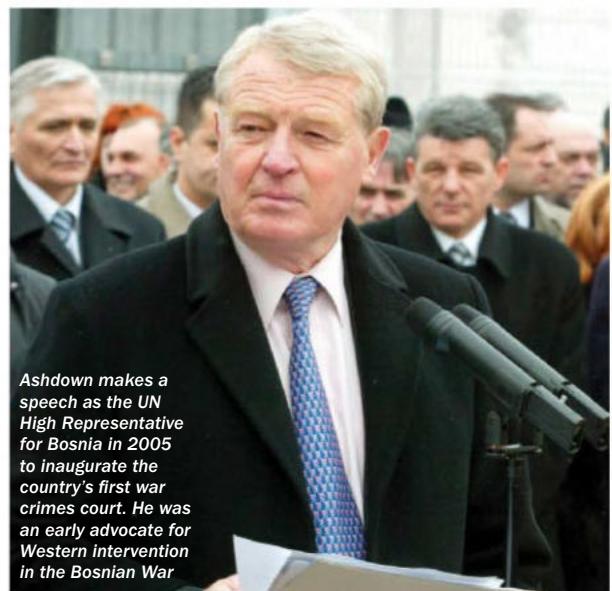
*Ruined buildings in Sarajevo*



but it gives you a model to view the times that you're in."

With the rise of the far-right in the West and the aggressive expansionism of Russia, Ashdown, as a keen WWII historian, finds the apparent comparisons between today and the events of more than 70 years ago appalling, "My next book is going to be about the extraordinary story of the resistance in Germany against Hitler. These were immensely brave people right at the top of the

administration who actively helped him to lose the war deliberately. So I'm reading a lot about that period and I'm horrified, the parallels with the 1930s and today are really frightening." Ultimately, Ashdown is in no doubt of what the warnings and lessons of the past can tell us, "I would go so far to say that if there is one compulsory subject that I would like our leaders and politicians to learn, it's history because unless you know the past, you have no way of judging the present."



*Ashdown makes a speech as the UN High Representative for Bosnia in 2005 to inaugurate the country's first war crimes court. He was an early advocate for Western intervention in the Bosnian War*

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BRIEFING





## BRIEFING

# War in Waziristan

This traditionally autonomous tribal area of Pakistan has become a catalyst for fundamentalist violence that threatens to destabilise the entire nation

WORDS TOM FARRELL

**O**fficially, Pakistan's security forces are now in the 'clearance' phase of Operation Zarb-e-Azb (Cutting Strike), the latest of several offensives into troubled Waziristan. The operation began in June 2014 and lasted 22 months. As of September, the government claims to have largely eliminated militant networks in this border region with Afghanistan and a phased program is underway to repatriate nearly 900,000 civilians displaced by the fighting. However, bomb blasts and gun attacks still take place in nominally government-held towns.

North and South Waziristan form part of the traditionally semi-autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The former is inhabited by farming Wazir tribes, and the south by semi-nomadic Mahsud and Wazirs. Although the fertile valleys of the north support wheat, millet and barley cultivation, most of the region is arid and mountainous. Even though most inhabitants of Waziristan share a Pashtun ethnicity, tribal feuding is common, together with banditry and smuggling.

The establishment of the 1,200-kilometre Durand Line in 1893 made Waziristan a semi-autonomous region that neither the British nor the kings of Afghanistan controlled. After 1947, the writ of Pakistan's government remained limited.

The early 21st century conflict is largely a legacy of the catastrophic civil war that has devastated neighbouring Afghanistan since 1978. On two occasions since then, foreign occupation – the Soviet Red Army in 1979–89 and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) after 2001 – turned

Afghanistan into a magnet for international jihadists infused with the doctrines of Salafist-Wahhabi Islam. Inevitably, this has had knock-on effects in neighbouring Pakistan, particularly after late 2001 and the expulsion of the Afghan Taliban from their base in the Tora Bora mountain complex.

Pakistan's military forces attacked foreign militants in Waziristan during 2004, but this brought them into conflict with local tribal fighters who saw their attack as a violation of their autonomy. The fighting in South Waziristan continued during 2005 and by the following year, the security forces tackled local Taliban and foreign Islamists in North Waziristan. Following a negotiated truce, the government agreed to restore a certain amount of autonomy in the region, although violence soon returned.

The year 2009 saw a major upsurge in the level of counterinsurgency when the government launched an offensive into the Swat Valley, a militant haven in neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By October, a large offensive into South Waziristan captured most militant bases within a month but local and foreign fighters had regrouped in North Waziristan by mid 2010. The most recent offensive into North Waziristan ended in April 2016, although residual counterinsurgency continues today.

The conflict has exerted a tremendous drain on Pakistan, killing at least 60,000 combatants and civilians and displacing more than 3 million. Despite Islamabad receiving \$30 billion from the United States since the launch of President George W Bush's 'Global War on Terror', the security forces have been severely taxed. By 2011, one third of the army was deployed

### FROM TRIBAL WAR TO TERROR

**1947**

Pakistan 'land of the pure' becomes independent of Britain but the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) retains its autonomy.

**December 2001**

Expulsion of Afghan Taliban by NATO force sends large numbers of militants into the mountainous border areas.

**March 2004**

The Pakistan Army and Al Qaeda battle in the White Mountains. A peace agreement signed in South Waziristan by Nek Mohammed Wazir soon collapses.

**May 2005**

Joint CIA-ISI operation near Peshawar captures Abu Faraj al-Libi, a senior Al Qaeda operative who is transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

Pakistani soldiers secure an area in South Waziristan, some 300 kilometres south-west of Islamabad, 2004. Some 500 fighters were believed to be hiding a top Al Qaeda leader near the Afghan border

in north-west Pakistan with the remainder in reserve or stationed on the Indian border.

The Waziristan conflict takes place against the backdrop of a wider Pakistan, brutalised by suicide terrorism. Multiple bomb blasts have included audacious strikes on military targets, 'soft' civilian targets and even claimed the life of a former prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, who was killed during the 2007 election campaign along with two dozen people.

However, while Islamabad is seen as a key ally by Washington, the dynamics of Pakistan's politics have created a fraught relationship. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles, aka drones, by the United States to target local and foreign jihadists is massively unpopular in Pakistan. Estimates vary on the numbers of civilians inadvertently killed in drone strikes, but even the current centre-right prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, has called for their suspension.

Moreover, over the nearly two decades during which Pakistan has veered between military and civilian rule, one constant has been the influence: the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). A generation ago, the ISI was the conduit for western – mostly American – aid to the mujahedeen during their anti-communist jihad in Afghanistan. Tutored largely in the madrassas (religious schools) of north-west Pakistan, and with ISI training, the Taliban emerged in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal to establish a fundamentalist state. Eventually, the ISI reaped what it has sown within its own borders, but it is Waziristan's civilians who paid the price. This embattled region has been called the 'most dangerous place on earth'.

### Infiltration from Afghanistan

In December 2001, vast towers of smoke rippled skyward from the Tora Bora mountains in eastern Afghanistan. Pulverised by laser-guided bombs and mopped up by US, British and Northern Alliance forces, many fugitive jihadists stood no chance of survival. Dire predictions that NATO forces would face a rerun of the Soviet experience 20 years before seemed nonsensical.

In fact, hundreds of Taliban, together with Uzbek, Tajik, Arab and Chechen militants, had slipped over the Durand Line and established a new base in Pakistan. Local and foreign groups aligned with Al Qaeda initially included the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Lashkar-e-Islam, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, but by 2007 the major Pashtun groups would amalgamate under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. This was the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) aka Pakistani Taliban.

With the backing of the Bush administration, 80,000 Pakistani troops entered the FATA in March 2004 and would do so another seven times over the next two years. While recapturing

insurgent-held territory was a major priority, the apprehension of senior Al Qaeda leaders was another. As soldiers clashed with militants around the White Mountains on the Afghan border on 16 March, it was rumoured that the security forces had come close to capturing bin Laden's deputy and eventual successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri. Among those captured by the security forces were hundreds of Chechen, Uzbek and Tajik fighters.

The following month, the first peace agreement was signed with the militants of South Waziristan, but it collapsed after two months when the leading insurgent, Nek Muhammad Wazir, was killed in the first United States drone strike in Pakistan. This allowed Baitullah Mehsud to assume leadership of the Waziristan insurgency.

Ranged against the insurgents was a military regime in Islamabad, put in power by a coup in 1999. Shortly after the first Waziristan excursion, the retired armed forces commander turned president, Pervez Musharraf, revived the all-powerful National Security Council (NSC), a legacy of military rule in the 1960s.

Nevertheless, by 5 September 2006, the military and Baitullah's forces had signed the Waziristan Accord in the mountainous village of Miramshah near the Afghan border. The agreement made provisions for aid and reconstruction together with compensation for the relatives of those killed and a ban on foreign fighters entering the territory.

However, long-term peace would prove unsustainable. Following an airstrike on a madrassa in Bajaur agency that killed dozens a month after the Accord, blame was attributed to the Pakistan Airforce and later a US drone strike. On 8 November, the TTP retaliated with a suicide attack on a military base 100 kilometres north of Peshawar, killing 42 soldiers.

During early 2007, helped by jihadists from Uzbekistan, the TTP extended control over the FATA agencies of Bajaur, South and North Waziristan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) was particularly effective; many members were ex-soldiers or 1980s-era mujahedeen, trained by the Soviets, ISI or even CIA. The IMU thus carried a fearsome reputation and eventually formed an alliance with the TTP called the Ansar al Aseer.

### Political and military meltdown

The truce officially survived several months into 2007, but in July a clash between police and students at the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad escalated into an eight-day siege. Eventually, security forces stormed the mosque. As the gunfire receded and smoke cleared, 108 people were dead. The Lal Masjid siege would haunt Musharraf and an



**Above:** A Pakistani army soldier armed with an MG3 machine gun sits alert in a bunker, monitoring the Afghan-Pakistani border



**A Pakistani paramilitary soldier is on high alert at a check post in Mir Ali bazar, northern Waziristan**

#### January 2006

Multiple US drone strikes on the village of Damadola near the Afghan border kill up to 25 civilians but no militants.

#### September 2006

The Waziristan Accord is signed with promises of reconstruction and compensation if foreign fighters are prevented from entering Pakistan.

#### 3 July 2007

The Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) siege begins in Islamabad. Security forces storm the mosque after a standoff. Al Qaeda deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri calls for Jihad in Pakistan.



#### 14 July 2007

Suicide bombers kill 25 soldiers in an attack on an army convoy in Waziristan. Another attack on a different convoy the following day kills 16 soldiers and five civilians.

#### September 2007

Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud leads an attack on a 17-vehicle convoy that captures 247 soldiers and officers without firing a shot.





A soldier stands near displayed weapons the military said were collected from militants in Mohammad Gat, located in Mohmand Agency

**"VAST TOWERS OF SMOKE RIPPLED SKYWARD FROM THE TORA BORA MOUNTAINS IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN. PULVERIZED BY LASER-GUIDED BOMBS AND MOPPED UP BY US, BRITISH AND NORTHERN ALLIANCE FORCES, MANY FUGITIVE JIHADISTS STOOD NO CHANCE OF SURVIVAL"**



The mother of a student killed during an attack by Taliban gunmen on Army Public School is comforted by a relative

investigative commission was formed to assess the security forces' handling of the incident. Together with concern over corruption scandals, the controversial amnesty of senior establishment figures and an extra judicial killing, the president was soon in conflict with Pakistan's judiciary.

In Waziristan, the immediate result was the collapse of the truce and ever more audacious attacks on the security forces. The nation was shocked by the lethal effectiveness of the TTP in June-September and by October, five army bases in Waziristan had been overrun with 65 troops either killed or captured. Over four days, ground troops backed by gunships swarmed across North Waziristan. 175 insurgents, 47 troops and 35 civilians were killed.

Meanwhile, Musharraf was facing a presidential election. He won but the Supreme Court challenged his victory. As the fighting wore on in Waziristan, the exiled Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) leader, Benazir Bhutto was returning to Pakistan. The homecoming ended in tragedy, part of a process of political disintegration that paralleled the nation's military quagmire.

His victory disputed, Musharraf dismissed 70 people including Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, later declaring a state of emergency amid nationwide protests. Then, on 27 December, while campaigning in Rawalpindi, Benazir Bhutto and 24 others were killed in a combined shooting and suicide bombing. Over twice that number died in the riots that followed, with many blaming an internal hit masterminded by the security forces. This was certainly the official line of Baitullah Mehsud. The day after Bhutto's assassination, he issued a statement denying TTP or Al Qaeda responsibility and blaming Musharraf for her death.

#### Changing order and new offensive

The year 2008 began with some successes for Pakistan's forces in Waziristan. Operation Zalzala (Earthquake) killed numerous TTP fighters but it also claimed an unknown number of civilians and displaced 200,000 in the region. Following the signing of a peace agreement in May, Operation Sirat-e-Mustaqeem (Righteous Path) offensive was launched to recapture TTP-held Jandola, a village on a strategically important road to South Waziristan's major town of Wana.

Later in the year, as Pakistani troops pulled back from the FATA agency of Bajaur, pro-government elders began organising thousands of tribal fighters into Laskar. It was a strategy that appealed to the Pentagon, having witnessed – at that time – an apparent reduction of violence in Iraq through the effective 'buying off' of local leaders. A program by USAID for seven tribal agencies spoke of \$750 million over five years allocated to health, education and counter-narcotics.

#### October 2007

Offensive begins in North Waziristan against the Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP). Fighting in the adjacent Swat Valley begins after followers of Maulana Fazlullah's group ally with TTP.



#### November 2007

Pervez Musharraf declares a state of emergency, suspending the constitution after the Supreme Court challenges his electoral victory. He appoints a new court that confirms him as president.



#### December 2007

Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is assassinated at a Pakistan Peoples' Party rally in Rawalpindi. The TTP deny involvement and blame government forces.



#### Early 2008

A new coalition government establishes the tri-services framework with more co-ordination between the army, air force and navy during counterinsurgency operations.

If the fall of Musharraf was thought likely to defuse the insurgency, this proved to be a vain hope. Parliamentary elections in February led to a coalition between the main opposition parties, the Muslim League under Nawaz Sharif and the PPP, whose candidate Yousuf Raza Gilani became prime minister. When both parties co-operated on impeachment proceedings against him, Musharraf resigned.

However, no sooner had Benazir Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, been sworn in as president in September, than Al Qaeda attacked the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad. A truck loaded with explosives detonated, killing 54 people and injuring 266 others.

After Zardari and Gilani addressed the nation on television the Sherdil (Lion Heart) offensive was underway in the Bajaur and Tang Khata agencies of the FATA. Precision bombings preceded a ground push into the Bajaur and Khyber by late October. The government later announced that more than 1,000 insurgents had been killed. Among them were five Al Qaeda militants, four of them foreigners.

Meanwhile, a string of attacks in Mumbai (Bombay) during November left 166 dead. Although the perpetrators, Lashkar-e-Taiba, were based in Pakistan, they were not associated with Waziristan. But Indian accusations of ISI tolerance or even collusion with this group, which were later denied by Islamabad, inevitably created pressure that increased the momentum of the operations in the north west.

### Swat valley recapture

The picturesque Swat Valley is not traditionally part of the FATA, it had been incorporated into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa agency in 1969, but its fate became inevitably interwoven with the Waziristan War after 2007 when the radical Maulana Fazlullah, who had been broadcasting Islamist ideology by radio for years, allied with the TTP. Gradually, Salafist-Islamic practices became the norm in the valley region, which is about four hours drive from Islamabad.

In an attempt to mollify local opinion, the government attempted to implement Sharia law in Swat during early 2009. However, when negotiation with local militants collapsed in April, the army and air force launched a massive offensive into the valley. More than 2,000 insurgents were killed and 1.5 million civilians displaced. It would be years before many returned to their homes.

The Swat victory facilitated a massive build up of troops on the south and east borders of South Waziristan by June 2009. A three-month blockade of the TTP-held agency culminated in Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path to Salvation), a combined ground and air offensive against the estimated 20,000 TTP, Uzbek and Arab fighters in the region. By then the original TTP leader, Baitullah Mehsud, was dead, killed by a US



### September 2008

Suicide bombing on the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad kills 53 people. The army launches a new offensive in Bajaur agency that kills 1,000 militants, including Al Qaeda fighters.



### April 2009

After negotiations with Islamic groups break down, a major offensive is launched into the Swat Valley. Baitullah Mehsud is killed in August by a drone strike.

### October-November 2009

The army pushes into South Waziristan after blockading the area for months. Local paramilitaries and ex-Taliban provide assistance.

### May 2011

Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden is killed by US Navy SEALs in a compound in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. TTP and its allies vow revenge.





drone strike in August. The operation officially ended on 12 December with the recapture of South Waziristan's major towns, but 100,000 civilians had been displaced and although dozens of TTP fighters were dead, their new leader, Hakimullah Mehsud was still at large.

Further offensives spread out across the FATA during 2010 and in June, Islamabad declared victory within the agencies of Orakzai and Kurram. Multiple terror attacks across the north west and Pakistan killed thousands during the next few years. This was also a period that strained US-Pakistan relations. A particular issue of contention has been the consequences of drone strikes. These have been credited with killing up to 3,000 militants and many innocent civilians – estimates of how many civilians varies between 158 and 965 – since June 2004. Drone strikes have inspired large-scale protests across Pakistan and been ruled illegal by the Peshawar High Court.

Ironically, the apprehension of Osama bin Laden provided a major rationale for US involvement on Pakistan and escalation of the Waziristan conflict. His eventual killing by US Navy SEALs on 1 May 2011 took place in a compound in Abbottabad, outside of the FATA. When a Pakistani doctor who had helped the CIA locate bin Laden was jailed the following year, it resulted in a major cut in US aid to Pakistan. Moreover, relations had also been soured by the Salala incident, when NATO and Pakistani forces clashed on the Afghan border in November 2011, resulting in supply routes into Afghanistan being cut for several months.

## Continued attacks

The TTP has courted world notoriety in recent years. In October 2012, it attempted to kill a 14-year-old girl from the Khyber region, Malala Yousafzai, for "promoting secularism." An attack on a school in Peshawar in December 2014 killed 150 people, mostly children. Since the rise of IS in Iraq and Syria, however, many within TTP and its IMU allies have decamped to the middle and inevitably there are fears that IS will proliferate within Pakistan. The TTP, now led by the former Swat Valley-based militant Maulana Fazlullah, is believed to have fragmented into competing factions.

The current Zarb-e-Azb offensive began after the TTP and IMU killed 26 people in an attack on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, which involved suicide attacks, grenades and rockets. Up to 30,000 extra troops were deployed in the north west and US drone strikes on North Waziristan resumed after a halt of several months.

At present, the level of violence has decreased compared to 2011-14, but terrorist groups have still demonstrated the capability to execute appalling mass casualty strikes across Pakistan. Given the topography of the border with Afghanistan and the animus that exists towards the war waged by Islamabad and its US allies, it seems that Waziristan could remain a breeding ground for local militancy and a haven for foreign fighters. For its long-suffering population, that prospect is a disaster.

# UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE MQ-9 PREDATOR

**MANUFACTURER:**  
**GENERAL ATOMICS**  
**AERONAUTICS SYSTEMS**  
**INTRODUCTION:** 1995

**PAYOUT: HELLFIRE SURFACE TO AIR MISSILES**  
**SPEED: 217 KILOMETRES-PER-HOUR**  
**WEIGHT: 1020 KILOGRAMS**  
**CRUISING ALTITUDE: 15,200 METRES**



**FIRST PAKISTAN STRIKE: 18 JUNE 2004**

**NUMBER OF STRIKES BY 2016:**

**423 (51 BY BUSH ADMINISTRATION, 372 BY OBAMA ADMINISTRATION)**

**ORIGIN OF UAV MISSION: AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN**

### November 2011

A skirmish between Pakistan Army and NATO on the Afghan border results in NATO's supply routes into Afghanistan being closed by Pakistan until the following July.

### October 2012

14-year-old Malala Yousafzai is seriously injured by TTP gunmen. She later wins the Nobel Peace Prize as a campaigner for local girls' education.



### February 2013

A bomb attack on Shia Muslims in Quetta kills 89. The Waziristan-based Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claims responsibility. Maulana Fazlullah assumes leadership of TTP in November.

### June 2014

Following a combined TTP and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan attack on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, a new offensive is launched within Waziristan.



### October 2016

After 63 people are killed in an attack on a police college by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, the group claims it is working with IS in Pakistan.

# REVIEWS

Our pick of the newest military history titles waiting for you on the shelves

## THE NORMAN CONQUEST

### WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S SUBJUGATION OF ENGLAND

**Written by:** Teresa Cole **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £20 **Released:** Out now

#### WE WAS ROBBED! (AND HARRIED, DESPOILED AND KILLED)

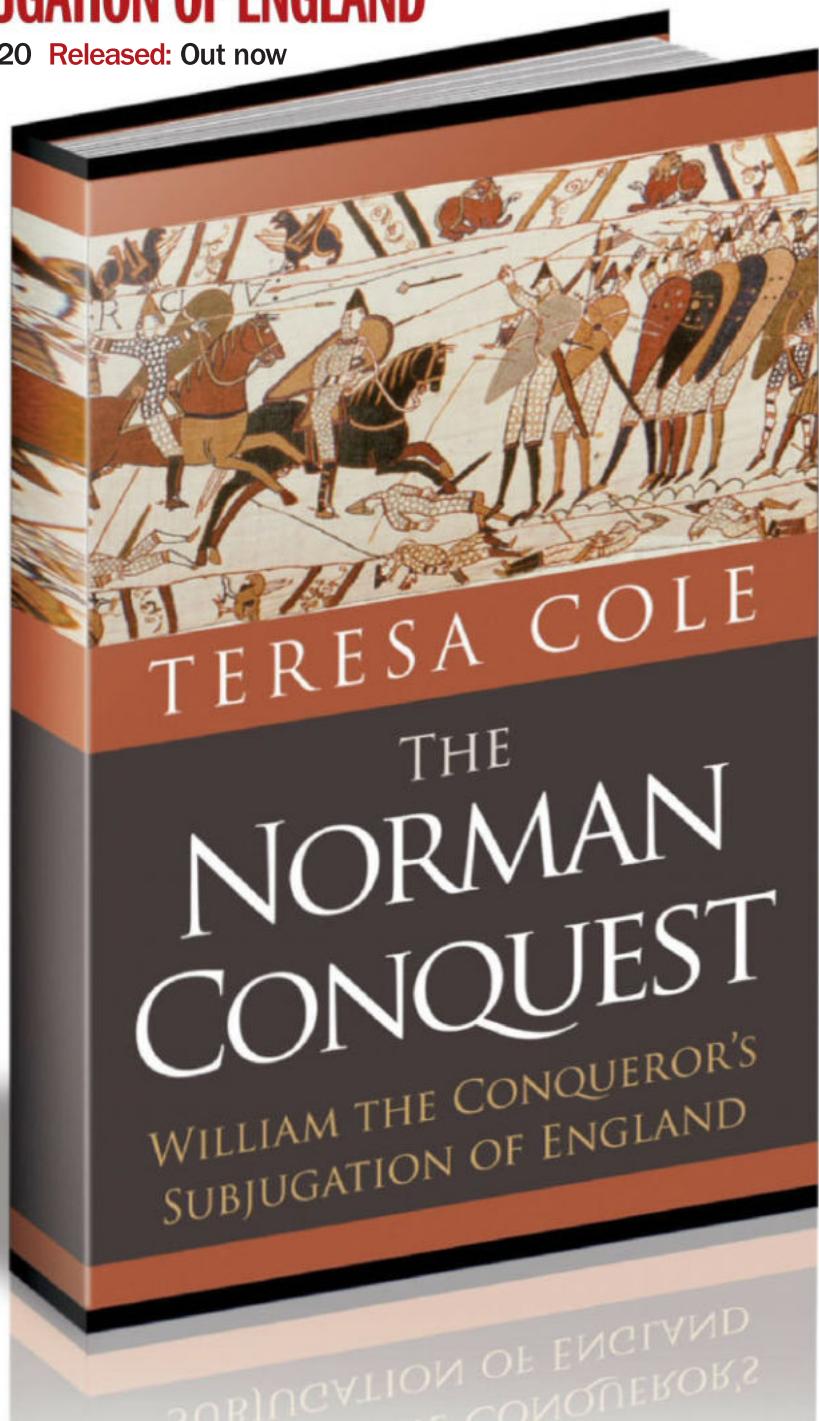
Even 950 years after the event, the Norman Conquest still provokes division. It seems all but impossible for a historian to approach it without, in the end, taking sides: Norman or Anglo-Saxon, William or Harold. In part, this is because the near contemporary sources are almost all Norman – with the exceptions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and, intriguingly, the Bayeux Tapestry – and thus require interrogation. That the Normans, alongside their skill in castle building, were also early masters of the dark art of spin is pretty clear: the question remains, how much was spun?

Teresa Cole firmly takes on the Anglo-Saxon cause. She sets the Conquest in the context of the previous century of history, starting with the accession to the throne of England, by the foulest of means, of England's worst-ever king, Æthelred. Gifted a settled, ordered country by the labours of Alfred the Great and his successors, Æthelred squandered it all, pouring the country's wealth away in a futile attempt to buy off Viking armies. Finding the country such a cash cow, the Vikings decided to stay and, in 1016, Cnut conquered England.

If there is any one person to blame for the Conquest, that man is Æthelred. A competent, even a less cowardly, king would have been able to face down the Viking threat. But Cnut had set the precedent and when, 50 years later, Edward the Confessor died without an obvious heir, the beasts began to prowl. England had been taken once; it might be taken again.

Cole does a fine job of leading the reader through the events of 1066. In hindsight, whoever you might favour, it is clear that luck played the greatest part in that bloody series of events. For the people of the time, however, it was not luck, but God's will. That William should essay such an invasion without a clear belief that God, indeed, willed it seems incredible in the context of the time. His victory, eventually, confirmed it for his contemporaries. Although in reaching this conclusion, they forgot Augustine's dictum that God hates evil but permits it. Deus non vult.

**"IN HINDSIGHT, WHOEVER YOU MIGHT FAVOUR, IT IS CLEAR THAT LUCK PLAYED THE GREATEST PART IN THAT BLOODY SERIES OF EVENTS. FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE TIME, HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT LUCK, BUT GOD'S WILL"**



# GAME OF SPIES

## THE SECRET AGENT, THE TRAITOR AND THE NAZI

**Written by:** Paddy Ashdown **Publisher:** Harper Collins **Price:** £20 (Hardback) **Released:** Out now

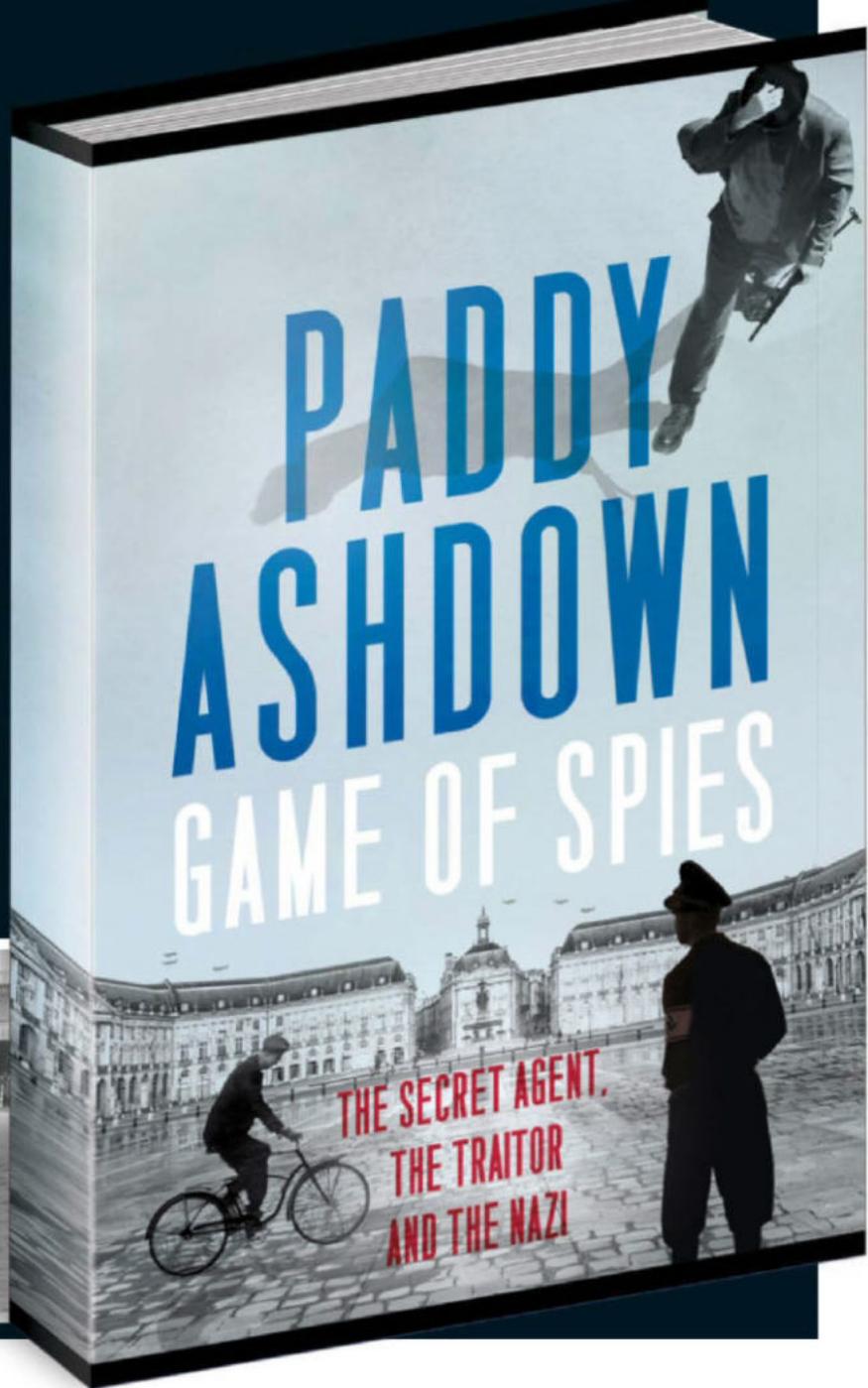
PADDY ASHDOWN TELLS THE EXTRAORDINARY TALE OF A LETHAL SPY-RING IN OCCUPIED FRANCE IN AN EXCITING WORK FILLED WITH COURAGE & TREACHERY

Game Of Spies is an espionage story set in occupied France and reveals the lethal spy triangle that existed in Bordeaux between 1942-44. Three men: French, British and German clashed amidst a hotbed of collaboration, betrayal and assassination. The Frenchman was André Grandclément, an aristocratic, right wing leader of the French Resistance in south-west France who collaborated with the occupying Germans. It is his treachery that forms the crux of the story.

Ashdown has been able to include new sources from the private papers of the British agent Roger Landes. Landes was a decorated member of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and when his forgotten documents were discovered, they were handed to Ashdown who knew their importance. "I realised that I had the capacity to write a book that was able to follow the lives of these three men as they tried to find and fight each other in Bordeaux over a period of two years. This had never been done before so therefore, I could produce an intimate portrait of what it felt like to be a secret agent in south-west France as part of the Resistance."

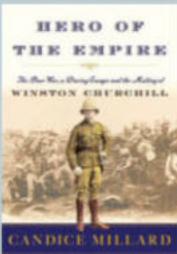
The result is an original work that benefits from Ashdown's skill as a writer. Written in the style of a thriller, Game Of Spies is page-turning history that recreates life in occupied Gascony with a high attention to detail. Along with the three protagonists, there is also a peppering of characters on all sides that display every human virtue and flaw. Bordeaux itself is a character in its own right as a beautiful city caught in the struggle for France's survival. The story is also a poignant reminder that within living memory Britain provided hope and dedicated huge resources for dangerous, covert operations to free Europe from darkness.

**"ASHDOWN HAS BEEN ABLE TO INCLUDE NEW SOURCES FROM THE PRIVATE PAPERS OF THE BRITISH AGENT ROGER LANDES"**



# ALL ABOUT HISTORY

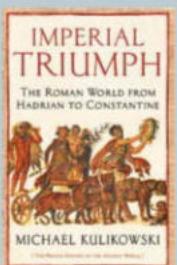
## RECOMMENDED READING



### TITLE: HERO OF THE EMPIRE: THE MAKING OF WINSTON CHURCHILL CANDICE MILLARD

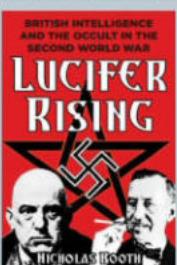
The enduring image of Churchill is the World War II version – balding, chubby, defiantly chomping on a cigar – in his youth, though, he cut a far more dashing figure. It's this incarnation that Candice Millard focuses on. It effectively takes one year of Churchill's life (1899 when he was aged 24) and argues that those 12 months forged the man that would become one of history's true heavyweights.

Although Churchill recounted this tale of derring-do himself in his books *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* and *My Early Life*, Millard's retelling of this colourful episode and its aftermath is a thrillingly told reboot.



### IMPERIAL TRIUMPH MICHAEL KULIKOWSKI

When picturing the Roman Empire, it's easy to think of its emperors as the sole guiding hands that steered the course of this great civilisation, the key personalities that shaped it for good or ill. While ostensibly an examination of those that held the reins during the 2nd to 4th centuries when the empire was at its peak, Michael Kulikowski's *Imperial Triumph* is also a detailed study of how the legacy each left behind wasn't just in the wars fought and the nations conquered, but also the relationships cultivated, the appointments made, and the connections forged between families from across the empire.



### LUCIFER RISING: BRITISH INTELLIGENCE AND THE OCCULT IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR NICHOLAS BOOTH

Few corners of the Third Reich are as drenched in mythology and misinformation as that of Nazi dalliances with the occult. A staple of popular culture (see *Indiana Jones*, *Captain America*, etc), this folderol has scanty relationship with fact, as Nicholas Booth's *Lucifer Rising* makes clear. Taking in the dizzying volume of Britain's WWII intelligence agencies and a formidable roster of big name characters – decadent occultist Alistair Crowley and *Bond* creator Ian Fleming appear on the cover as the totemic two – Booth debunks some of the daffier myths, leaving a fascinating tale about the use of astrology for propaganda.

This is symptomatic of a sort of structure where ideas are picked up and discarded at will. A particularly frustrating device is to construct each chapter as if it were a spy novel, with people holding portentous meetings or sweet-talking border guards before leaping backward to introduce each person and concept, but as Booth cycles through topics so quickly, most of them tangential, *Lucifer Rising* can't help but be frustrating.

# A GUEST AT THE SHOOTERS' BANQUET

**Author:** Rita Gabis **Publisher:** Bloomsbury **Price:** £20

A BRAVE ACCOUNT OF THE ATROCITIES OF THE THIRD REICH, FROM A LESS FAMILIAR PERSPECTIVE

Autobiographical victim accounts of the Holocaust have played an extremely important role in advancing our understanding of the horrors of the Nazi camps ever since the publication of Primo Levi's harrowing Auschwitz memoir *If This Is A Man* (1947). In more recent years, descendants of the perpetrators of genocide have also started to discover the genre to uncover painful and long silenced truths about their fathers or grandfathers.

Rita Gabis' *A Guest at the Shooters' Banquet* is the latest powerful example of this trend. An American citizen with partly Jewish and partly Catholic ancestry, Gabis' family roots lie in Lithuania, the Baltic country in which nearly the entire Jewish population was wiped out by the Nazis and their local helpers after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa in the summer of 1941. Out of some 210,000 Lithuanian Jews, an estimated 195,000 were killed during the mass exterminations that occurred between June and December 1941.

One of the local helpers involved in the shootings was Gabis' Catholic grandfather, Senelis, who came to the United States in 1945 and never spoke about his wartime experiences. In her book, which is largely an autobiographical journey in search of the true identity of her once beloved grandfather, Gabis discovers that, between 1941 and 1943, he served as chief of the German-controlled Security Police in the Lithuanian town of Sventoji.

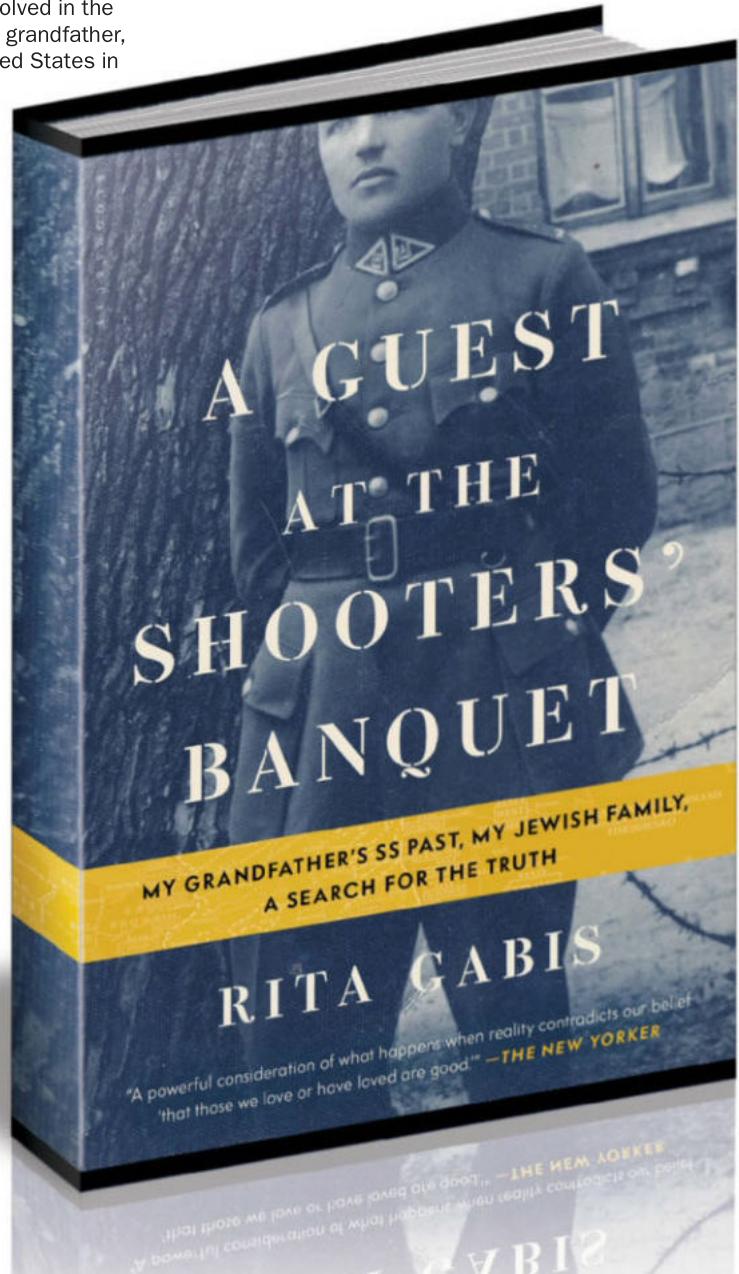
When, only a few years ago, Gabis first stumbled across evidence that her maternal grandfather may have been involved in wartime atrocities, she decided to collect both archival material about the mass killings and first-hand testimonies from surviving witnesses. She embarked on a four-year journey of discovery that took her to Lithuania, Germany, Israel, and Poland. The result is a densely documented but eminently readable account of that journey during which she makes painful discoveries about her grandfather.

In his capacity as local Security Police chief, Senelis, was directly involved in a particularly gruesome massacre in the autumn of 1941, when 8,000 Jews were shot at close range

over the course of three days in the nearby killing field of Poligon. Following the killings – and this is what the book's title invokes – the perpetrators were invited to a banquet in Sventoji, where they were "rewarded" for their deeds with plenty of food and alcohol in a relaxed, even cheerful, atmosphere.

Gabis' descriptions of the massacre and the subsequent banquet are very powerful, even for those readers who are already aware that Nazi killers were often rewarded for their "work" with alcohol, food and loot from their victims.

Writing such a book must have been very painful for the author, and Gabis is to be congratulated on bravely digging up material that heavily incriminates her own grandfather. In doing so and in making this intimate journey into the horrific world of the Holocaust in Lithuania, she helps us to better understand certain human micro-dynamics of the genocide that are all too often lost in debates on the Holocaust.



# THE LIBERATION OF EUROPE 1944-1945

**Author:** Mark Barnes **Publisher:** Casemate UK **Price:** £25

**PROOF THAT BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGES CAN STILL PACK A PUNCH**

In an age of high-definition streaming video, when old footage is routinely remastered and colourised, the black and white photograph might seem obsolete. Yet its power endures.

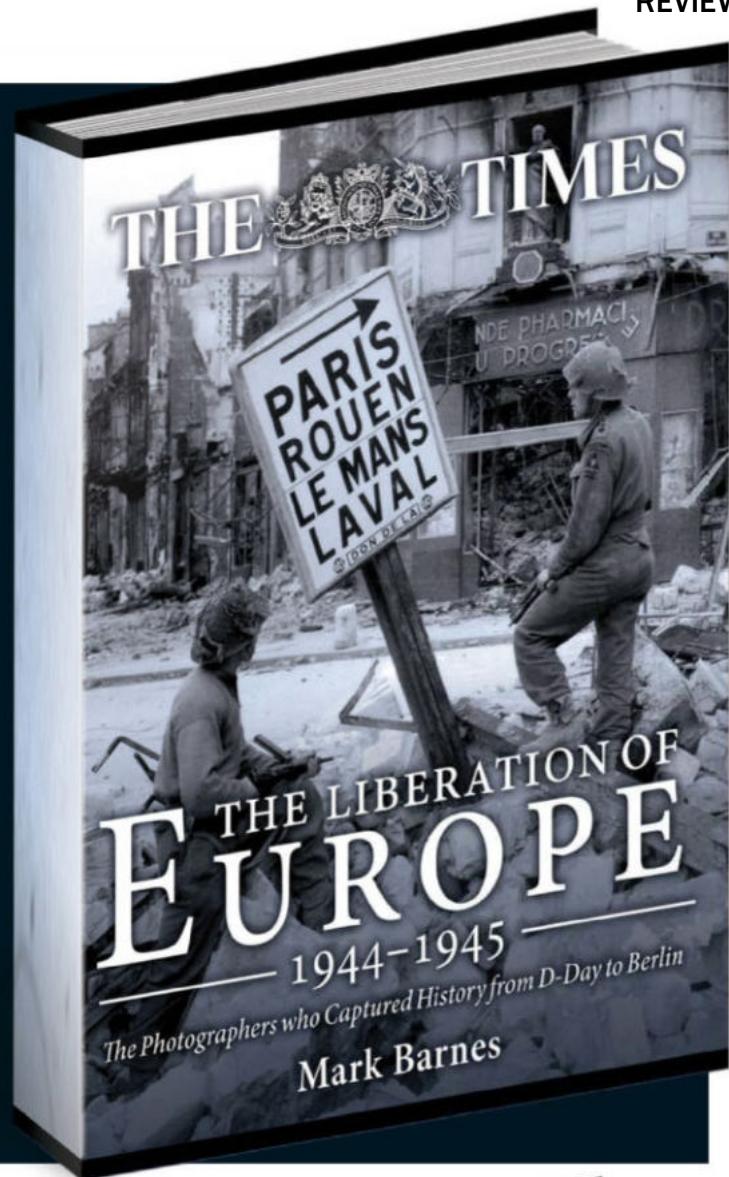
The public who followed the course of the liberation of Europe, starting with the Normandy landings, viewed these images as the cutting edge of the news media, but even though we are now used to clearer, bigger and more intimate imagery, the photographs contained in this book still have the power to impress, shock and sometimes surprise.

The Times photographers who chronicled the progress through France and on to Germany in the last desperate months of World War II, risked their lives to present the public with images of the fighting. Mark Barnes, as well as providing a brief background to the lives and work of the photographers themselves, has chosen a huge selection of images, providing hours of fascinating browsing.

The book gives some valuable insight into techniques employed by the media at the time. Photoshop might have been more than 40 years away, but composite images could still be crafted to create more of an impact, such as the image of a B-17 Flying Fortress landing while a squadron fills the air, dramatically and inaccurately, above it.

Other photographs stick in the mind as well: a mountain of Guinness stout in a warehouse, a pile of spent shells next to a row of Sherman tanks, the mangled crew of a German self-propelled gun and, most shockingly, a stack of corpses at Belsen. The images in this book may be static, but they still have the power to move.

**"THE IMAGES IN THIS BOOK MAY BE STATIC, BUT THEY STILL HAVE THE POWER TO MOVE"**



# SOUTHWARK IN THE BLITZ

**Author:** Neil Bright **Publisher:** Amberley Publishing **Price:** £12.99

**A TREASURE TROVE OF DETAIL FOR AFICIONADOS OF LOCAL HISTORY**

The story of the Blitz, the concerted bombing campaign mounted by the Luftwaffe against cities in Great Britain during World War II, has been told many times and from many different perspectives. Neil Bright has focused on a relatively small area, the London boroughs of Southwark, Bermondsey and Camberwell (amalgamated in the modern borough of Southwark), to chart the impact of the Blitz on the local population.

Bright's narrative recounts how, as far as the civilian population of Britain was concerned, the war went from distant spectacle (watching dogfights in clear blue skies) to terrifying ordeal (hunkering down in bomb shelters and praying you didn't take a direct hit).

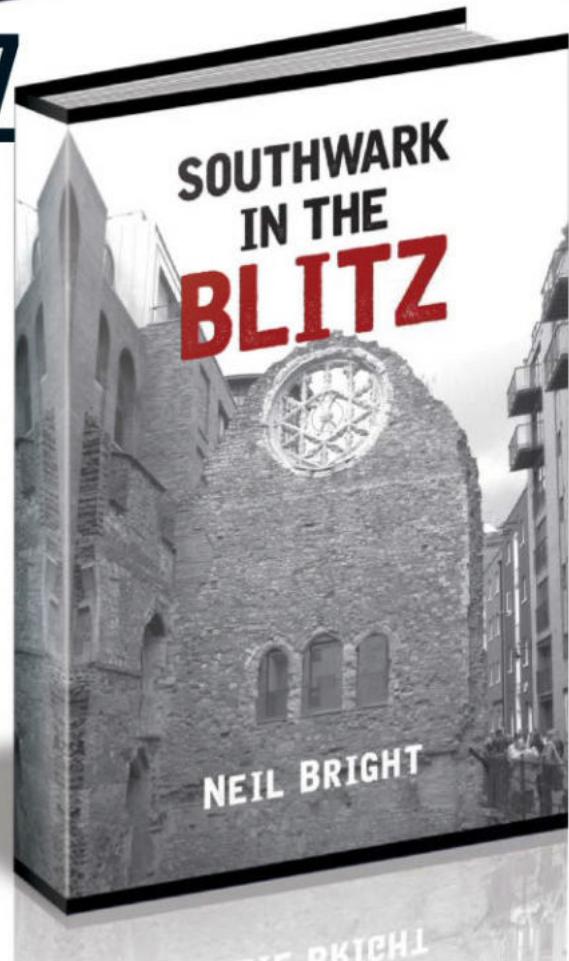
Split into chronological chapters that tell the story of the changing nature of the

war, from the night blitz, to the nuisance raids, the baby blitz and finally the V-Weapon attacks, Bright has researched his subject thoroughly.

The level of detail can be an impediment, as the tales of destruction, death, heroism and tragedy flit before our eyes in rapid succession. It makes for an exhaustive, but sometimes exhausting read, and the book may have benefitted from a more overarching viewpoint or a deeper delve into some of the human stories (the book is most effective, for example, when Bright weaves several narratives together, notably when telling the story of a bomb hit on the Druid Street Arch shelter in October 1940).

For local history enthusiasts and students of the Blitz, however, Bright has delivered a detailed and valuable resource.

**"AN EXHAUSTIVE, BUT SOMETIMES EXHAUSTING READ"**



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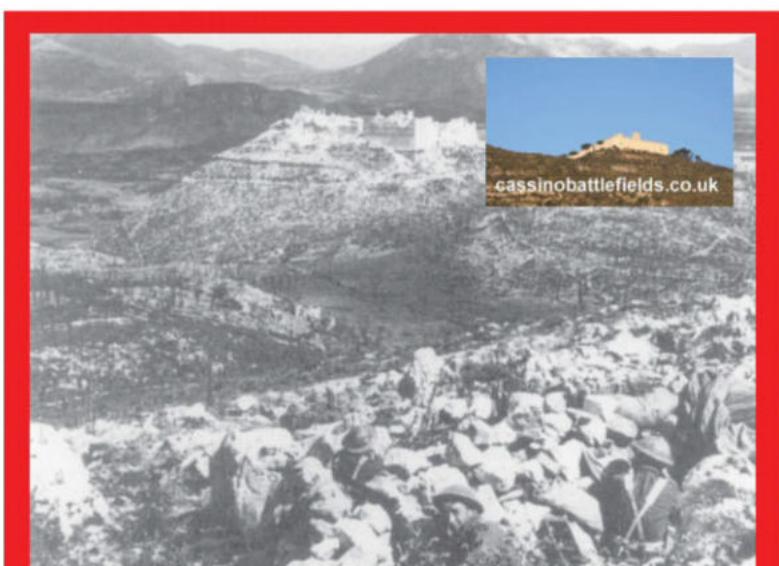


Photo: Men of 1st Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment up on Snakeshead Ridge overlooking the bombed Monastery at Monte Cassino Feb 44.

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# NAPOLEON CHAMBER POT

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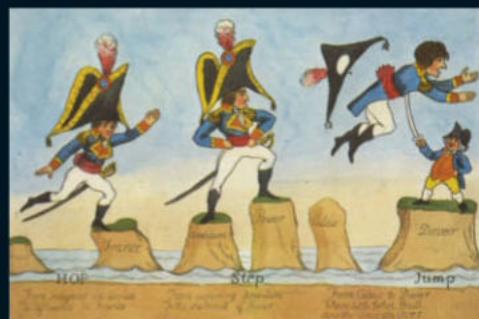
large army was assembled at Channel ports, particularly Boulogne, and Napoleon seriously considered using a fleet of troop-carrying balloons as well as ships and invasion craft.

If the French force could get past the Royal Navy, then Britain, with her relatively small army, might be conquered. Tensions were high but one way of reacting to the threat was to laugh at 'Boney'. The most popular method of satirising Napoleon was through cartoons, which were sold in printed sheets for as little as sixpence. The emperor was often portrayed in a derisory way, usually as an overambitious little man or even as a monkey.

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1805 and although the underlying meaning of putting the emperor's head in a chamber pot is obvious, it was probably made for decorative rather than practical purposes. Luckily for the owner, the planned invasion never took place.

*Below: "Hop, Step and Jump" John Bull defeats Napoleon on the White Cliffs of Dover in this 1803 British cartoon*



**"THE EMPEROR WAS OFTEN PORTRAYED IN A DERISORY WAY, USUALLY AS AN OVERAMBITIOUS LITTLE MAN OR EVEN AS A MONKEY"**

*Left: Although this chamber pot is now a rare collectable item, it may have originally been produced in vast numbers*



Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

The chamber pot is part of the collections of the Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove.

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